

## The Return of the Repressed

### Riots, 'Race' and Dualization in Three Advanced Societies

In the expansionary decades following the mid-twentieth-century traumas of depression and war, the rich countries of the capitalist West came to think of themselves as peaceful, cohesive and egalitarian societies – in a word, as *civilized* in both the ordinary, morally effusive, meaning of the term denoting the most accomplished form of culture and human life, and in Norbert Elias's ([1937] 1978) sense of 'civilizing' as engaged in a long-term process of restructuring of social relations entailing the extension of chains of interdependencies, the multiplication of organizations, and the pacification of social exchange via the monopolization of the use of public violence by a centralized bureaucratic state.

Advanced nation-states such as the United States, France and Great Britain also embraced a vision of themselves as increasingly *democratic* in Tocqueville's understanding of the term, that is, oriented towards the ineluctable reduction of inequalities of condition, particularly those derived from 'ascribed' positions and identities. Indeed, one of the most salient dimensions of the self-understanding of First World societies during the immediate postwar period was that inherited statuses, such as class, ethnicity or 'race', were increasingly irrelevant for access to valued social locations and the attendant bundle of life chances.<sup>1</sup> Mass consumption, the supposed *embourgeoisement* of the working class, the growing weight of educational credentials in the competitive allocation of persons in an increasingly

<sup>1</sup> This broad-brush portrait does not allow recognition of significant variations among what are cursorily labelled 'First World' societies. For a pointed presentation of differences in the sociopolitical construction of inequality and poverty in France, Great Britain and the United States, see Silver (1993: esp. 342–8).

differentiated occupational structure, the diffusion of liberal individualism: together these factors promised to usher in an unprecedented era of personal well-being and social comity. Two books, published simultaneously in 1960 in the United States, may be taken as emblematic projections of this emerging societal vision, as revealed by their titles: Walt W. Rostow's (1960) *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* and Daniel Bell's (1960) *The End of Ideology*. Sociology gave a scholarly expression to this belief by elaborating the notion of 'meritocracy'. In the United States, a whole school of stratification research (based at the University of Wisconsin, Madison) laboured to formalize this vision of an increasingly fluid and porous class structure by making 'status attainment' the conceptual backbone of countless studies of 'opportunity'.<sup>2</sup>

During the same period, it became widely accepted that the more extreme forms of inequality in basic life circumstances had been or were about to be alleviated, if not eradicated, by the wide provision of public goods, such as education, health and housing, through the arm of the welfare state – in the case of Western European countries – or via the trickle-down effects of sustained free-market growth and targeted programmes of assistance – in the United States. Buoyed by industrial consolidation and by the continued expansion of newer services sectors, First World societies came to construe poverty as a mere *residue* of past inequities and backwardness or as the product of *individual deficiencies* liable to remedy – at any rate, as a phenomenon bound to recede and disappear with the full 'modernization' of the country.<sup>3</sup> Thus, on the eve of the contentious 1960s, the economist John Kenneth Galbraith (1958) called poverty an 'afterthought' and an anomaly in US society, characterizing it as pertaining only to 'case poverty' and 'insular poverty'. True, the so-called islands of

<sup>2</sup> The terminology itself is revealing of the ideological presuppositions of such research. Knotterus (1987) dissects the image of society underlying 'status attainment' research, carried out in particular by members of the Wisconsin School. One could show that the ideology of *social meritocracy* (as embodied by the writings of Talcott Parsons, Peter Blau and Otis Dudley Duncan, on the American side, and Raymond Aron and Henri Mendras, on the French side) fulfilled for Euro-American societies a function similar to that performed for Brazil by the national myth of 'racial democracy', as formulated by Gilberto Freyre ([1938] 1946).

<sup>3</sup> Castel (1978) offers a historical account of this problematic in the case of the United States, while Wilson and Aponte (1985) record the cyclical 'disappearance' and 'rediscovery' of the question of poverty in American society over the twentieth century. On the corresponding gyrations of the French debate (around the theme of 'exclusion' after the late 1980s), consult Paugam (1993); on the British discussion, L. Morris (1994).

poverty were rather populous, since there were still tens of millions of poor people in America, among whom were a disproportionate number of blacks, but they would not remain so for long: when he launched the 'War on Poverty' in 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson proudly announced that the United States would eradicate poverty by the year 1976, so that the bicentennial of the country would also herald the birth of the first 'society of affluence' in history. In France, at about the same time, the equally rosy horizon of a 'new society' was being beamed by the hegemonic Gaullist party under Jacques Chaban-Delmas's leadership, later to be refurbished as the promise of 'advanced liberal society' by President Giscard d'Estaing, whose Labour Minister had published a best-seller proclaiming that one can 'vanquish poverty in the rich countries' (Stoléru 1974). As Sinfield (1980: 93) notes, through the 1970s, there was 'no poverty debate in France', no political mobilization around the issue, as well as no official policy to combat it.

The obsolescence of class was presumed to apply equally to ethnicity and 'race' (or postcolonial divisions).<sup>4</sup> To varying degrees, First World societies also took to seeing themselves as 'nonethnic' social formations, increasingly homogeneous and unified as *gemeinschaftliche* relations founded on ancestry, region and culture gave way to instrumental affiliations based on interest, occupational specialization and the functional imperatives of a complex technological economy. *Assimilation for all* was the order of the day (Gordon 1961), and adoption of the national cultural patterns seemingly the only available course for outgroups that lived in, or entered into, these societies (Hirschman 1983).

By thus eliding the question of ethnicity, the ideologues of advanced society marched in the steps of classical and contemporary social science. Did not Karl Marx and Emile Durkheim, progenitors of the two main rival currents of sociology, agree that capitalist industrialization would result in the replacement of traditional social bonds by impersonal forms of identification and belonging rooted in commodity relations and increasingly abstract civic ideals? Likewise, the two paradigms of social change that dominated social science in the

<sup>4</sup> 'Race' is put in quotation marks to stress that (i) racial identity is but a particular case of ethnicity (one that falsely presents itself as, and is believed to be based on, biological inheritance), i.e., a historically constructed principle of social classification; (ii) the gamut of social and symbolic relations designated by 'race' (or 'colour') varies significantly from one society to the next and from one historical conjuncture to another; and with it (iii) the mechanisms of (re)production of racism as a mode of domination invoking nature as principle of legitimation.

postwar era, structural-functionalism (and its offshoot modernization theory) and developmental Marxism (led by the work of the Latin American *dependistas* and world-system theory), postulated that ethnicity and race were fated to be eroded and eventually disappear. Thus, for the advocates of modernization such as David McLelland, Alex Inkeles and Daniel Lerner (1958), the 'passing of traditional society' logically implied the dissolution of ascribed social ties and the concurrent emergence of the free, enterprising, 'achieving' individual, due to the rise of literacy, technology and the mass media.<sup>5</sup> For defenders of various Marxist theories of societal transformation, from André Gunder Frank and Fernando Enrique Cardoso to Immanuel Wallerstein, class formation was to wash away ethnicity and create a global class structure – eventuating, in the vision proposed by Wallerstein (1983), in a transition towards a 'socialist world order'. Various theories of postindustrial society shared these assumptions and similarly conceived ethnoracial divisions, not as enduring bases of social structuring endowed with their own dynamic, but as 'backward', reactive or derivative principles of grouping, transitory impediments in the natural course of modern society towards universalism (Kumar 1995).<sup>6</sup>

### Violence from below: race riots or bread revolts?

Over the last two decades of the century, this self-image of the First World was shattered by spectacular outbursts of public unrest, rising ethnic tensions, and mounting destitution and distress at the heart of large cities. Far from witnessing a resorption of poverty and an erosion of ethnonational affiliations, advanced societies have been plagued by the concurrent spread of 'new poverty' and the surge – or

<sup>5</sup> The opposition between 'ascription' and 'achievement' is one of the founding antinomies of the structural-functionalist theory elaborated by Talcott Parsons (1971), which portrayed the United States as the historical incarnation of the supposedly universal ideal of the meritocratic society. For a curt and acerbic critique of the shortcomings of this theory, read Bourdieu (1975).

<sup>6</sup> Florestan Fernandes (1978: 7) offers a capsule expression of this widespread view in his appraisal of the nature and fate of ethnic divisions issuing from slavery in Brazilian society: 'The Brazilian racial dilemma constitutes a pathological social phenomenon, which can only be corrected by processes that would remove the obstruction of racial inequality from the competitive social order.' This position is of course much older: recall that the 'race relation cycle' of the early Chicago School, with its ordered progression from conflict and competition to accommodation and assimilation, pointed to the gradual resorption of ethnoracial divisions.

resurgence – of racializing ideologies often accompanied by violent conflicts directly involving youths in lower-class neighbourhoods (Wilson 1987; Mingione 1993). Three instances of urban disruption in France, England and the United States among many illustrate the phenomenon.<sup>7</sup>

October 1990 in Vaulx-en-Velin, a drab, quiet working-class town on the periphery of Lyons, France: several hundred youths, many of them the offspring of immigrants from the Maghreb, take to the streets to confront police after a neighbourhood teenager dies in a motorcycle accident caused by a patrol car. For three days and nights, they clash with law enforcement officials and the *Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité* (CRS, riot brigades) hastily dispatched by the government, pelting police vans with rocks, ransacking shops, and setting 200 cars on fire. When calm finally returns, tens of injured are counted, damage is estimated at some 120 million dollars, and the country is in a state of shock. The long-simmering rage of the *banlieues* – declining peripheral areas with high densities of degraded public housing – zooms to the top of the political agenda and will dominate public debate for years on end.<sup>8</sup>

July 1992 in Bristol, England: a nearly identical chain of events triggers several nights of rioting on the Hartcliffe estate, a dilapidated industrial district on the southern edge of town. Violence breaks out after two local teenagers joyriding on a stolen police motorcycle are killed in a collision with an unmarked police car. Later that night, some hundred youths go on a rampage through the local shopping centre. When police counterattack, they are showered with bricks and stones, steel balls, scaffolding and gasoline bombs. The confrontation quickly spills throughout the neighbourhood. More than 500 elite troops have to be called in to restore order to a one-

<sup>7</sup> I can give only the briefest sketch of such incidents here. For a fuller account of the rise of collective violence and ethnoracial tensions in the housing projects of France's urban periphery during the 1980s, see Adil Jazouli's (1992) *Les Années banlieues*; for an exemplary American case, Bruce Porter and Marvin Dunn's (1984) analysis of *The Miami Riot of 1980*; for an overview of the British riots of the early 1980s, read the Scarman Report and its offshoots (Benyon 1984).

<sup>8</sup> Clashes continued throughout the summer of 1991, forcing the central government to expand and institutionalize various programmes of 'incident prevention', in particular during the summer vacation (the so-called *Opérations anti-été chaud*). Similar outbursts of collective violence would occur periodically over the ensuing decade, culminating in the wave of simultaneous riots that rocked France for three long weeks in November 2005 (in reaction, again, to the death of two marginalized youths during an encounter with the police, aggravated by the scornful public statements of Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy).

square-kilometre area temporarily turned urban guerrilla zone. Similar large-scale incidents break out that same summer in Coventry, Manchester, Salford, Blackburn and Birmingham.<sup>9</sup>

April 1992 in Los Angeles: the acquittal of four white police officers implicated in the brutal videotaped beating of Rodney King, a defenceless black motorist arrested after a car chase, sets off an explosion of civil violence unmatched in American history in the twentieth century. In the ghetto of South Central, white motorists are snatched out of their cars and beaten, shops are vandalized, police cars are overturned and set aflame. The Korean-owned liquor outlets, swap-meets and markets that dot the area are targeted for systematic destruction. So overwhelming is the eruption that neither firefighters nor the police can prevent the torching of thousands of buildings. Rioting promptly mushrooms outwards as scenes of mass looting multiply. A state of emergency is proclaimed, and 7,000 federal troops, including 1,200 Marines, are drafted in and deployed. Sniper fire and gun battles between rioters, police and storeowners who take up arms to defend their shops bring the death toll to forty-five. By the end of the third day of upheaval, nearly 2,400 have suffered injury, and over 10,000 are under arrest; 1,000 families have lost their homes and 20,000 their jobs. Total destruction is estimated at a staggering one billion dollars.

These outbursts of collective violence are but three drawn from a list of urban disturbances too long to enumerate.<sup>10</sup> Most of the disorders, big and small, that have shaken up the French working-class *banlieues*, the British inner city, and the ghettos and adjacent *barrios* of North America have involved chiefly the youths of impoverished, segregated and often dilapidated urban neighbourhoods caught in a spiral of decline; they appear to have been fuelled by growing ethnoracial tensions in and around those areas. Thus the dominant interpretation in media accounts, as in political debates, has been that they are essentially 'race riots' expressive of animosity against, or between, the ethnic and/or immigrant 'minorities' of these countries (Cross and Keith 1993; Gooding-Williams 1993).

<sup>9</sup> In 1980, 1981 and 1985, major riots erupted in 'inner-city' areas of Bristol, London, Liverpool, Birmingham and a host of other declining working-class municipalities. Incidents resumed in the early 2000s, this time prominently involving youths of Asian descent (Amin 2003).

<sup>10</sup> One should add to incidents in France, Britain and the United States the rash of violent attacks on foreigners and asylum seekers in Germany and repeated incidents involving North African immigrants in northern Italy and southern Spain.

There is much, on the surface of things, to support this view. The Europe of the 1980s was indeed swept by a seemingly unstoppable wave of xenophobic sentiment in the public sphere if not in everyday life.<sup>11</sup> In France, long-covert anti-'Arab' hostility burst out into the open (Silverman 1990) and fuelled a reported increase in racist assaults. It found a political expression in the xenophobic populism of the National Front (Husbands 1991), which in turn stimulated the growth of a wide 'anti-racist' movement, symbolized by the irruption on the public scene of the activist group *SOS-Racisme* (incubated under the wing of the Socialist Party). In Great Britain, antagonism between black West Indians, South Asians and whites has flared up in repeated street confrontations and grown more acrimonious. Debates about street crime and police brutality have been racialized to the extent that public unrest and violence are increasingly openly perceived and treated as essentially 'black problems' (Solomos 1988). Meanwhile in the United States a society-wide backlash against the gains made by so-called minorities (mainly African Americans but also, secondarily, Latinos and some Native and Asian groups) in the wake of the Civil Rights confrontations of the 1960s has led to a noticeable deterioration of race relations signalled *inter alia* by an escalation in racially motivated or 'hate' crime, a generalized fear of black males in public space (Anderson 1990), interethnic incidents on university campuses, and the blatant exploitation of anti-black feelings in local and national political campaigns (Franklin 1991; Anderson 1995). And, while Europe has become haunted by the spectre of the crystallization of American-style 'ghettos' on its soil, the United States has been consumed by nightmarish visions of a so-called 'underclass', a fearsome group said to have coalesced at the heart of the segregated metropolis which epitomizes all the urban pathologies of North America.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>11</sup> On the rise (or resurgence) of racism on a European scale and its various national manifestations, see Allen and Macey (1990), Miles (1992) and Holzner (1993).

<sup>12</sup> Mingling social science, journalism and common sense, empirical analysis and ordinary preconceptions, the academic-cum-policy myth of the 'underclass' has fused and given new life to age-old prejudices against African Americans, the poor and state intervention by demonizing the black urban subproletariat (Wacquant 1992a). Its invention partakes of a broader reconfiguring of the ideological map of 'race' in the United States, along with the legend of Asians as 'model minority', the symbolic unification of diverse population streams coming from Central and South America under the administrative category of 'Hispanics', and the growing demands for official recognition made by the self-proclaimed representatives of 'multiracial' persons.

In all three countries, then, urban violence and collective unrest have come to be closely linked, if not equated, in the public mind with ethnoracial division and/or immigration. In the United States, this association is a long-standing one, dating from the era of black urbanization after Emancipation, if not further back, and it is periodically reactivated during periods of economic contraction or social conflict (Lane 1986). In Europe, this connection is more recent, even as it has proved ideologically powerful in the rocky socioeconomic conjuncture opened by the sweep of deindustrialization and economic recessions in the mid-1970s. Nonetheless, several elements suggest that the label 'race riot' is misleading and hides another, deeper phenomenon, mixed with it in different proportions, and this on both sides of the Atlantic.

The collective urban disorders of the 1980s and 1990s are not a simple extension of traditional racial uprisings such as the United States has experienced throughout the last century (Young 1970). Contrary to the ambient discourse of journalism and certain magazine-inspired sociology, we are not witnessing an 'Americanization' of urban poverty and protest, a mutation in the regime of urban marginality that would herald an epochal transatlantic convergence between the two continents on the US pattern, as will be shown in the second part of this book. A closer look at their anatomy suggests that these urban disorders led by lower-class youths have, to a varying extent depending on the country, *combined two logics*: a logic of protest against *ethnoracial injustice* rooted in discriminatory treatment – of a stigmatized quasi-caste in the United States, of 'Arab' and other 'coloured' migrants or citizens come from the former colonies in France and Great Britain – and a class logic pushing the impoverished fractions of the working class to rise up against *economic deprivation and widening social inequalities* with the most effective, if not the only, weapon at their disposal, namely, direct confrontation with the authorities and forcible disruption of civil life.<sup>13</sup>

As a period of neoliberal restructuring following the throes of stagflation, the 1980s were the decade of the slow maturing of *mixed riots* – mixed in terms of their dynamics and goals as well as by virtue of their multiethnic composition. For, contrary to media portrayals, neither the declining French *banlieues* nor the degraded British inner cities are solely or even predominantly populated by immigrants, and those who partook in unrest in them were more often than not

<sup>13</sup> On the logic and social conditions of the political efficacy of such popular disruptions, see Piven and Cloward's (1977) classic study, *Poor People's Movements*, a very topical book in the current phase of rightward recentring of progressive political parties.

recruited across a kaleidoscope of ethnic categories. While youths from Maghrebine or West Indian immigration assumed the lead in the urban clashes that rocked France and England during those years, they acted in concert with, and with the active support of, the offspring of native European families residing in formerly industrial neighbourhoods now lying fallow. In the case of the British 'summer disturbances' of 1981, for instance, even though the triggering incidents typically entailed a confrontation between the police and black youth, 'an estimated 60% of the rioters involved in the worst anti-police violence at Toxteth and many of those who participated in the so-called 'copy-cat' riots were white' (Unsworth 1982: 69). Moreover, the demands of the rioting youths were those of working-class youths everywhere: decent jobs, good schools, affordable or improved housing, access to basic public services, and fair treatment by the police and other agencies of the state (Jazouli 1992). There is nothing 'ethnic' about them – save the demand that the state, precisely, cease to treat them as such.

Similarly, during the riots of South Central Los Angeles, the thousands who pilfered merchandise from burning supermarkets and mini-malls were far from being all black: more than half of the first 5,000 arrests were Latinos, and another 10 per cent whites. The uprising was not exclusively an Afro-American outcry against gross racial discrimination perpetrated by the police and further affirmed by an egregious miscarriage of justice (the blanket acquittal of the white policemen involved in the beating of Rodney King by a lily-white suburban jury). It was also, and inseparably, a 'bread revolt' against grinding poverty and the severe aggravation of daily living conditions brought on by economic recession and cutbacks in government programmes, as testified by the televised scenes of Latinos but also Asians and whites milling about ransacked stores in search of free goods. As one of the city's seasoned observers put it, 'the nation's first multiracial riot was as much about empty bellies and broken hearts as it was about police batons and Rodney King'.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Mike Davis, 'In L.A., Burning All Illusions', in Hazen (1992: 43–54); for further materials, see the excellent selection of press reports compiled by the Institute for Alternative Journalism (Hazen 1992) and some of the essays in Gooding-Williams (1993) and Baldassare (1994). This interpretation was later validated by Pastor (1995), who shows that the active participation of Latinos and poverty rates were central to the outbreak and spread of the riot, and by Murty et al. (1994), who report, based on street interviews with 227 residents and workers in South Central Los Angeles, that participants in the outbreak perceived themselves as 'freedom fighters' over the issues of poverty, unemployment, police brutality and racial discrimination, a mix of motives that fits well the confluence of structural forces determining the clash.

### Violence from above: deproletarianization, relegation, stigmatization

It is tempting to view outbreaks of collective violence 'from below' as symptoms of moral crisis, pathologies of the lower class, or as so many signs of the impending societal breakdown of 'law and order' (e.g., Banfield 1970). Thus the typical response of the English authorities to the wave of violent incidents that rocked the cities of the Midlands in the summer of 1992 was to bemoan the deviant behaviour and amorality of lower elements of the working class. After the Bristol riots, politicians vied to blame 'mindless hooliganism' fuelled by alcohol, even though the residents of Hartcliffe agreed that hostility between youths and police had been building up for months if not years; that no 'hooligan' was ever spotted or arrested during the riots; and that consumption of alcohol on the nights of the clash was not above normal. In 1981, the skinheads were also singled out for special condemnation and were 'diabolized as bestial marionettes of Right-wing extremism' by the press (Unsworth 1982: 76). Similarly, in the United States, the loathsome tale of the 'underclass' has provided a low-cost, depoliticized, ready-made discourse with which to account for the relentless rise of violence in and around the ghetto since the mass upheavals of the 1960s. Indeed, such violence has been widely seen as definitive proof of the existence of that group defined precisely by its antisocial behaviours.

Yet close comparative analysis of their timing, makeup and unfolding shows that, far from being irrational expressions of impenitent incivility or pathological atavism, the public disorders caused by dispossessed youths in the cities of Europe and the United States over these past dozen years constitute a (socio)logical response to the massive *structural violence* unleashed upon them by a set of mutually reinforcing economic and sociopolitical changes. These changes have resulted in a polarization of the class structure which, combined with ethnoracial segregation and welfare state retrenchment, has produced a *dualization of the social and physical structure of the metropolis* that has consigned large sections of the unskilled labour force to economic redundancy and social marginality.<sup>15</sup> This violence 'from above' has three main components:

<sup>15</sup> For a view from above of the roots and dynamics of this process of dualization, see Sassen (1991b), Mollenkopf and Castells (1991), Fainstein et al. (1992); a call for analytical caution on this front is sounded by Marcuse (1989).

- 1 *Mass unemployment*, both chronic and persistent, amounting, for entire segments of the working class, to *deproletarianization* and the diffusion of *labour precariousness*, bringing in their wake a whole train of material deprivation, family hardship, temporal uncertainty and personal anxiety.
- 2 *Relegation to decaying neighbourhoods* in which public and private resources diminish just as the social fall of working-class households and the settlement of immigrant populations intensify competition for access to scarce public goods.
- 3 Heightened *stigmatization* in daily life as well as in public discourse, increasingly linked not only to class and ethnic origin but also to the fact of residing in a degraded and degrading neighbourhood.

These three forces have proved all the more noxious for combining against the backdrop of a general upswing in inequality. Far from representing a peripheral by-product of a 'Third-worldization' of rich countries or regressions towards premodern forms of sociopolitical conflict, this return of the repressed realities of poverty, collective violence and ethnoracial divisions issuing from the colonial past at the heart of the First World city must be understood as the result of the uneven, disarticulating development of the *most advanced sectors* of capitalist societies, whose manifestations are therefore quite unlikely to abate soon (as I shall stress in the third part of the book).

Unlike previous phases of economic growth, the uneven expansion of the 1980s and 1990s, where it occurred at all, failed to 'lift all boats' and resulted instead in a deepening schism between rich and poor, and between those stably employed in the core, skilled sectors of the economy and individuals trapped at the margins of an increasingly insecure, low-skill, service labour market, and first among them the youths of neighbourhoods of relegation.<sup>16</sup> In the United States, this gap has grown so pronouncedly that it is readily palpable on the streets of big cities, where beggars and the homeless became a common sight in the 1980s even in lavish business districts, and in the extremes of luxury and destitution, high society and dark ghetto, that have flourished and decayed side by side. Thus, while the share of national wealth owned by the richest 1 per cent of Americans

<sup>16</sup> Statistical data on the rise of income inequality in England, France and the United States for that period are in Townsend (1993), CERC (1989 and 1997) and Danziger and Gottschalk (1993) respectively.



doubled in a decade, jumping from 17.6 per cent in 1976 to 36.3 per cent in 1989, more people lived under the official 'poverty line' in 1992 than at any time since 1964: thirty-six million, including one of every three black or Latino households.

In France, income inequality grew for the first time in the postwar era in spite of a host of social transfer measures targeted on deprived categories implemented by successive Socialist governments. As the ranks of the 'Golden Boys' bulged at the Palais Brogniard along with the unprecedented appreciation in stocks and real estate values, so too did those of the unemployed, the homeless and the destitute. By the close of the 1990s, according to official estimates regularly broadcast by the media, over four million French people lived in poverty, 300,000 were deprived of regular housing, and over half a million were recipients of the national guaranteed minimum income plan (RMI) hastily instituted in 1988 in an effort to curb rising destitution. On the national news, reports of conflicts between 'bosses' and 'workers' going on strike to defend their wages and social rights have been replaced by stories about delinquency and somber assessments of the predicament of *éremistes* (recipients of the RMI, a term coined to capture the new reality of quasi-permanent rejection from the wage labour sphere). In Great Britain supply-side economics and rollbacks in social expenditures by the state have likewise caused a redistribution of wealth upwards and a sharp divergence of living standards between working class and upper class as well as between provinces (Dunford 1995). The northern sections of the country have been dramatically impoverished, as the regional economies of major industrial centres such as Manchester, Liverpool and Glasgow crumbled. So much so that some analysts took to comparing the provinces of the North of England to the Italian *mezzogiorno* to highlight the growing national dualism.<sup>17</sup>

Employment shifts from manufacturing to education-intensive jobs, on the one side, and to deskilled service positions on the other, the impact of electronic and automation technologies in factories and even in white-collar sectors such as insurance and banking, the erosion of unions and social protection have combined to produce a simultaneous destruction, casualization and degradation of work for the residents of the dispossessed districts of the large cities. For many of them, economic restructuring has brought not simply loss of

<sup>17</sup> For broader discussion of the mechanisms whereby the breakdown of the Fordist regime of accumulation and regulation fed deflationary adjustment and regional inequality throughout Britain, see Dunford and Perrons (1994).

income or erratic employment: it has meant outright denial of access to wage-earning activities, that is, *deproletarianization*. Thus most West European countries have witnessed a steady rise not only in unemployment – the average rate in the European Community increased from 2.9 per cent in 1974 to nearly 11 per cent in 1987 – but also, more significantly, in the number of the *long-term* unemployed who come overwhelmingly from the lower class. By the early 1990s, the proportion of jobless without employ for a year or more exceeded three-quarters in Belgium, one-half in the Netherlands, and 45 per cent in France and the United Kingdom. The comparable figure of 8 per cent for the United States is misleading because its measurement is different (it suffices to work one hour in a month to be counted as 'employed'), and it hides enormous variations across categories and locations: in many inner-city areas, effective jobless rates among adults hover well above 50 per cent, and for many exclusion from formal employment lasts for years and even decades. Survival based on a mix of casual labour, welfare support and illegal activities trumps regular wage labour participation.<sup>18</sup>

The persistent, nay permanent, exclusion from wage labour of a segment of the working class and the correlative growth of the informal economy in declining urban areas are two converging indicators of the formation, at the core of First World cities, of what Fernando Henrique Cardoso and Enzo Faletto (1979) called an 'excess reserve army of labour', for whom economic advancement translates into a regression of material conditions and a curtailment of life chances. Witness the spread of hunger or malnutrition (attested by the prosperity of 'soup kitchens' and assorted food banks) and the reappearance of bygone contagious diseases such as tuberculosis in the flagging neighbourhoods of relegation of Los Angeles, Lyons and Leeds.

Just as their economies underwent deindustrialization and globalization, advanced countries have absorbed a fresh influx (or the definitive settlement) of immigrants from the Third World who are typically channelled into those very neighbourhoods where economic opportunities and collective resources are steadily diminishing.<sup>19</sup> The formation of a worldwide space of circulation of capital over the past

<sup>18</sup> At the core of Chicago's ghetto in 1988, for instance, nearly six adults in ten lived off meagre welfare payments, and fully 80 per cent of recipients expected to remain on public aid for more than a year (see ch. 3 *infra*, pp. 109–11).

<sup>19</sup> On the causes and role of international migration in activating or amplifying social transformations in advanced societies, see the conceptual précis by Zolberg (1991) and the empirical analyses of Sassen (1989a), Tarrius (1992) and Castles (1993).

three decades has led to the knitting of a global network of labour circulation that has reshaped the population and brought large numbers of fresh migrants into the big cities of Europe and North America (Fassman and Münz 1996; Portes 1999). These 'new immigrants', as they are often called to distinguish them from the transatlantic migration chains that primarily connected the Old and the New Worlds until the middle of the twentieth century, originate mainly in former colonies of Western Europe or in the economic and political satellite countries of the United States. They tend to congregate in the poorer neighbourhoods of large urban centres, those where housing is cheaper, where they can more easily gain a foothold in the informal and entrepreneurial sectors of the economy, and where networks of compatriots or coethnics provide critical assistance in the process of adaptation to life in the new country (Portes and Rumbaut 1990; Castles 1993).

Whether or not the arrival of the new immigrants has accelerated the partial deproletarianization of the native working classes by providing a substitute pool of pliable labour needed by the expanding deskilled service sectors is unclear. What is beyond doubt is that their concentration in the segregated and degraded lower-income neighbourhoods has accentuated the social and spatial polarization in the city because it occurred at a time when, thanks largely to state support of individual housing through urban planning and fiscal policy, the middle classes were fleeing mixed urban areas and relocating in protected territories where they benefit from a higher level of public services (France), provision their basic household needs on the private market (United States), or enjoy a mix of superior public and private goods (United Kingdom).

Spatial segregation intensifies hardship by accumulating in isolated urban enclaves downwardly mobile families of the native working class and immigrant populations of mixed nationalities who are young, economically fragile and equally deprived of readily marketable skills in the core of the new economy. Thus, more than half of Vaulx-en-Verin's 45,000 residents in 1990 lived in large, cheerless public housing projects, and one in four were of foreign origin; more than 40 per cent were under age 20, and one-third of all adults could not find employment. Government programmes of training and job search assistance are unable to help youths gain a firm foothold in the shrinking and fragmenting labour market, and sports and cultural activities can provide only so much diversion. Similarly, joblessness among inhabitants of south Bristol aged 16 to 25 at the time of the riots stood at 50 per cent and had risen with the increased presence

of foreign families. The crime rate in Hartcliffe – reputed to be among the highest in England at the time – was in no small part due to the severe dearth of community resources and of recreational facilities needed to keep youths occupied when trapped in the social void between school and work. Turning to the United States, between 1978 and 1990, the county of Los Angeles lost 200,000 jobs, most of them high-wage unionized positions in industry, just as it received an infusion of nearly one million immigrants. Many of these jobs were lost by minority residents of South Central and inner-city communities where public investment and programmes were being aggressively curtailed (Johnson et al. 1992). As a consequence, in 1992 unemployment in South Central exceeded 60 per cent among young Latinos and blacks, and the illegal drug economy had become the most reliable source of employment for many of them.

Such cumulation of social ills and the narrowing of the economic horizon explain the atmosphere of drabness, ennui and despair that pervades poor communities in large Western cities and the oppressive climate of insecurity and fear that poisons daily life in the black American ghetto (Wacquant 1992a and chs 2 and 4, *infra*). Residents of these derelict districts feel that they and their children have little chance of knowing a future other than the poverty and exclusion to which they are consigned at present. Added to this sense of social closure is the rage felt by unemployed urban youths due to the taint befalling residents of decaying urban areas as their neighbourhoods become denigrated as hellish breeding grounds of 'social pathologies'. Youths of Maghrebine origins in the northern district of Marseilles, their counterparts originating in Jamaica and Pakistan in London's Brixton, and blacks trapped on Chicago's South Side do not suffer only from material deprivation – shared, in the ethnically mixed areas of urban Europe, with their white neighbours – and from the ambient ethnoracial or ethnonational enmity: they must also bear the weight of the public scorn that is now everywhere attached to living in locales widely labelled as 'no-go areas', fearsome redoubts rife with crime, lawlessness and moral degeneracy where only the rejects of society could bear to dwell.

As we shall demonstrate in chapter 6, the reality and potency of the territorial stigma imposed upon the new urban outcasts of advanced society should not be underestimated. First, the sense of personal indignity it carries is a highly salient dimension of everyday life that colours interpersonal relations and negatively affects opportunities in social circles, school and the labour market. Second, there exists a strong correlation between the symbolic degradation and the



ecological disrepair of urban neighbourhoods: areas commonly perceived as dumpsters for the poor, the deviant and the misfit tend to be avoided by outsiders, 'redlined' by banks and real estate investors, shunned by commercial firms, all of which accelerates decline and abandonment. They can be overlooked at little cost by politicians – except, precisely, when they become the site of visible unrest and street clashes. Third, territorial stigmatization encourages amongst residents sociofugal strategies of mutual avoidance and distancing which exacerbate processes of social fission, feed interpersonal mistrust, and undermine the sense of collectivity necessary to engage in community-building and collective action.

Lastly, there is the curse of being poor in the midst of a rich society in which participation in the sphere of consumption has become a *sine qua non* of social dignity – a passport to personhood if not citizenship (especially among the most dispossessed, who have nothing else at their disposal to signal membership). As testified by the proliferation of 'mugging' in the British inner city, *dépouille* (the stripping of fancy clothes under threat of force) in the estates of the French *banlieues*, and gold-chain snatching and drug dealing on the streets of the black American ghetto, violence and crime are often the only means that youths of proletarian background with no employment prospects have of acquiring the money and the consumer goods indispensable for acceding to socially recognized existence.<sup>20</sup>

### Political alienation and the dilemmas of penalization

If direct and spontaneous forms of *infra-political protest* by way of popular disruption of public order, outright seizure of goods, and destruction of property have spread in the declining urban boroughs of advanced society, it is also the case that formal means of pressure on the state have declined along with the disruption and then decomposition of traditional machineries of political representation of the poor.

In France, the crumbling of the Communist Party and the centrist turn of the successive Socialist governments have left the working class in deep political disarray (Masclat 2003) – a disarray upon

<sup>20</sup> For illustrations in the American context, see Taylor (1989) and Padilla (1992). One suspects that a similar logic was at work, *mutatis mutandis*, in the frightful weekend eruptions of 'funkers' on the wealthy, white beaches of Ipanema and Copacabana in Rio de Janeiro in the mid-1990s.

which the extreme Right-wing party of Le Pen was quick to capitalize with an ideology scapegoating immigrants that, for lack of something better, has the virtue of offering a crystal-clear picture of society, a coherent diagnosis of its main ills, and a radical cure that promises to restore workers' sense of dignity as citizens (redefined as 'nationals'). In Great Britain, a decade and a half of Thatcherism prolonged by the neoliberal policies of Tony Blair has speeded up the long-term decline of trade unions and the ideological revamping of the Labour Party (Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones 2000), while the breakup of working-class communities undercut the local mobilizing capacity of their grass-roots organizations. In the United States, where the lower class has never had much of a political voice, the mass exodus of whites and the middle class to the urban periphery, the nationalization of political campaigns under the tutelage of corporate funders, the demise of big-city electoral 'machines', and the administrative fragmentation of the metropolis have converged to marginalize poor minorities in the political field (Weir 1993). Stripped of the institutional means to formulate collective demands in a language comprehensible by state managers, what are poor urban youths to do if not take to the streets? A teenage rioter from Bristol speaks for many of his peers in East Harlem, the Red Belt boroughs of Paris, and Toxteth in Liverpool when he exclaims:<sup>21</sup>

I don't have a job and I'll never have one. Nobody wants to help us get out of this shit. If the government can spend so much money to build a nuclear submarine, why not for the inner cities? If fighting cops is the only way to get heard, then we'll fight them.

The widening gulf between rich and poor, the increased closure of political elites onto themselves and the media, the increasing distance between the lower class and the dominant institutions of society all breed disaffection and distrust. They converge to undermine the legitimacy of the social order and to redirect hostility toward the one state organization that has come to symbolize its unresponsiveness and naked repressiveness: the police. In the vacuum created by the lack of political linkages and the absence of recognized mediations between marginalized urban populations and a society from which they feel ejected, it is no wonder that relations with the police have everywhere become both salient and bellicose, and that incidents with the 'forces of order' are invariably the detonator of the

<sup>21</sup> Cited in *The Guardian*, 20 July 1992, in a report in the wake of the Bristol riot.

explosions of popular violence that have rocked poor neighbourhoods over the past two decades in the city (Cashmore and McLaughlin 1992; *Cultures et Conflits* 1992).<sup>22</sup>

In the French working-class *banlieues*, the police are regarded by the youths of the housing projects (of North-African and French origins alike) as an undesirable presence sent for the express purpose of intimidating and harassing them, and nearly all instances of collective unrest over the past two decades have at their start an incident opposing them to agents of law enforcement. It is not a coincidence if the police invented the bureaucratic category of *violences urbaines* (plural) in those years, based on a pseudo-scientific scale of levels of aggression (of which the 'gathering of youngsters in the building stairways' is the first stage!), in order better to depoliticize these confrontations and make them liable to a strictly penal treatment (Bonelli 2001). The Scarman Report on the riots that shook British cities in the early 1980s noted likewise that inner-city youths are 'hostile and vindictive towards the police and no longer have any confidence in them' (Benyon 1984: 126). Most careful observers concurred that the police were the primary target as well as active participants in the erupting street violence, responding vigorously to the attack of youths, making the riots a vivid expression of the 'mutual alienation of police and sections of multi-racial working-class inner-city communities' (Unsworth 1982: 73).

But it is in the segregated black and Latino areas of the American urban core that relations with the police are the most antagonistic and the most virulent. Residents of the ghetto are torn between their need for protection from rampant crime and their fear that police intervention will add to the violence, not diminish it, due to their discriminatory and brutal behaviour. In the desolate districts of the Los Angeles ghetto, the forces of order act as if they were waging a trench war with the residents, treating them as an army of occupation would its enemies (Davis 1992; Herbert 1997). In June 1992, Amnesty International released a report compiling evidence of a deep-seated pattern of routine police brutality against poor African Americans and Hispanics in Los Angeles going on unchecked for

<sup>22</sup> The other dominant institution which is perceived with enormous ambivalence, as both platform of opportunity and vehicle of official intrusion and external imposition, is the school, due to the long-overdue universalization of secondary education. Balazs and Sayad (1991) explore the range of reactions to the symbolic violence of public education in the French working-class *banlieue* of Vaulx-en-Velin, including rude behaviours (relabelled 'incivilities' in the idiom of official criminology), vandalism, avoidance and physical violence.

years with near-complete impunity from local and federal authorities.<sup>23</sup> Expanding on the scathing report of the Christopher Commission (1991) set up to inquire into the widespread use of 'excessive police force in the inner city' in reaction to the Rodney King videotaped beating, the sixty-page document details heinous incidents of abuse of force, often 'amounting to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment', that involve the unwarranted use of firearms 'in violation of international standards', shootings or beatings of compliant suspects and even innocent bystanders, the routine overuse of electric 'tazer' guns,<sup>24</sup> and the unleashing of attack dogs on suspects (including juveniles and minor offenders, some of them already in custody) who had surrendered and posed no threat.

For the disaffected youths of declining urban districts, then, the police constitute the last 'buffer' between them and a society that rejects them, and which they therefore view as 'the enemy', trespassers in a territory where their rule is often openly contested and incites defiance and hostility that can extend to verbal and physical aggression – as illustrated by the controversial song 'Cop Killer' by the rap singer Ice T. (whose namesake Ice Cube played a germane role in John Singleton's cult movie *Boyz n the Hood*). In all advanced countries, whenever the police come to be considered as an alien force by the population they are supposed to protect, they become unable to fulfil any role other than a purely repressive one and, under such circumstances, they can only add to discord and disorder, often fueling the very violence they are trusted to curb (Wacquant 1993).

<sup>23</sup> The entire report entitled *Police Brutality in Los Angeles, California, United States of America* (Amnesty International USA 1992) is recommended reading. That such a scathing study should fail to elicit any meaningful reaction from local and national authorities testifies to their remarkable indifference to endemic and routine police abuse in the neighbourhoods of relegation. The Rodney King affair was eclipsed a few years later by the so-called Rampart Division scandal, in which seventy officers from a special gang unit were found to engage routinely in gross criminal misconduct and abuse (deliberate beatings and shootings of criminal suspects, writing false reports and lying in court, and planting drugs and guns on gang members). As a result, scores of criminal convictions were overturned, and the city of Los Angeles entered into a consent decree with the US Department of Justice granting a federal judge the power to monitor the LA Police Department for a period of five years.

<sup>24</sup> A tazer gun is a hand-held electro-shock weapon. It allows police to neutralize potential or actual assailants by subjecting them to a powerful electric jolt from a distance. It can easily be abused since it leaves few if any external physical traces. Its deployment by police departments in the United States has been controversial: several studies have shown that the supposedly 'safe' electric shocks have caused the death of dozens of targets.

Political responses to the return of urban marginality and collective violence have varied significantly from country to country depending on national ideologies of citizenship, state structures and capacities, and political conjuncture. They span the *spectrum between the criminalization of poverty* and dispossessed populations, at one end, and *politicization of the problem* via the collective renegotiation of social and economic rights, at the other. The two tendencies, symbolized by the prison and the ballot box, can be observed to operate simultaneously in all three societies considered here, albeit in different combinations and trained on different categories, as various fractions of their respective ruling classes vie to steer state policy towards one or the other pole.<sup>25</sup> No country has fully avoided increased recourse to the criminal justice apparatus (irrespective of the evolution of crime), and all have had to reconsider some citizenship rights and the range of social entitlements, whether to restrict or expand them selectively. Yet it remains that, overall, the question has been most fully politicized in France and most completely depoliticized in the United States, with United Kingdom occupying a sort of median way between these two paths.<sup>26</sup>

Through a decade of urban strife, the French government passed legislation creating a guaranteed minimum income for those fallen through the cracks of the work and welfare grid. It expanded unemployment benefits and training schemes for unskilled youths; and it established a mechanism to transfer wealth from rich to poor cities (albeit a very limited one). The state also deployed a comprehensive urban redevelopment programme officially designed to improve conditions first in 400 and then in 751 'sensitive neighbourhoods'

<sup>25</sup> I have shown elsewhere how, over the decade that followed this initial diagnosis (1993), the solution consisting in penalizing social insecurity through the glorification and amplification of the penal state has diffused and generalized across the First World and even parts of the Second World (Wacquant 1999).

<sup>26</sup> The following characterization of patterns of policy reactions to urban marginality and disorder in the advanced societies is an analytic simplification that exaggerates the homogeneity and consistency of state responses in each country. One would need to distinguish in each case between different levels (central and local) and domains (ideological, legislative, judiciary, welfare, etc.) of response as well as between different sites of intervention (e.g., homelessness or collective violence), and between target groups (foreigners or citizens, welfare recipients or criminal offenders, etc.). Because states are highly differentiated and imperfectly co-ordinated organizational machineries, they often engage in policies that are either inconsistent or operate at cross purposes with one another. In addition, there exists a yawning gap between the proclaimed purposes and effective aims of a given policy, its bureaucratic implementation, and its effects at ground level.

throughout the country.<sup>27</sup> Renewed government activism was officialized by the nomination, at the end of 1990, of a Minister of the City (with rank of state minister, highest in the French administrative hierarchy) and by the political commitment of both President and Prime Minister to winning the battle of 'urban renewal'. Over the ensuing decade, new plans kept being concocted, and layers of measures added, combining spatially targeted interventions in the areas of housing rehabilitation, crime prevention, education, transportation and access to culture. The number of cities involved in such state-sponsored 'contracts' grew from 27 in 1977 to 247 in 2000. Yet urban disturbances continued, if in muffled fashion, as testified for instance by a string of incidents in the declining public housing estates of Argenteuil, Sartrouville and Mantes-la-Jolie in the Parisian periphery in 1994. Gradually, collective clashes between *cité* youths and the police have become a routine feature of life in the declining Red Belt – barely noticed by the media and tacitly accepted by city managers, unless and until they jump outside their usual range in sheer intensity and geographic spread, as they did in November 2005. The so-called social treatment of persistent urban marginality by means of 'urban policy' aimed chiefly at housing may alleviate some of its symptoms and please state elites, who can thereby continue to pay lip service to the doctrine of republican equality. It does nothing to attack its root causes: the fragmentation of wage labour feeding unemployment and casual employment.<sup>28</sup>

The response of the American authorities to the Los Angeles upheaval took a diametrically opposed tack. Once open rioting was checked by the prompt proclamation of a state of emergency, putting military 'boots on the ground', and aggressive police reaction, the first priority of the Bush Administration was to send a team of special prosecutors and to boost funds available to bring the full force of the law to bear on the thousands arrested during the disturbance. (A highly publicized and equally unsuccessful effort was made to identify and charge suspects of looting and assorted crimes based on evidence adduced by the thousands of hours of amateur video shot

<sup>27</sup> See Paugam's *La Société française et ses pauvres* (1993) for a detailed discussion of the centrepiece of this policy, viz., the creation of 'a national guaranteed minimum income' programme, its political rationale, foibles and actual impact, and Bachmann and Le Guennec (1996) for a recapitulation of a half-century of French urban policy.

<sup>28</sup> By the close of the 1990s, the predictable failure of 'urban policy' to remedy relegation in the French urban periphery had led the central government to roll out an aggressive policing campaign to contain its ramifying effects (Wacquant 1999).

during the riots.) Mayor Bradley loudly called for the hiring of more police officers and the building of more jails. The Los Angeles District Attorney stridently announced that the county would seek a minimum sentence of one year in prison for all those caught committing disturbance-related offences. And the US Attorney General William Barr used the riots as yet another pretext to push his platform of prison expansion as 'the solution to crime'. The local, state and federal governments thus joined in accelerating penal repression, even though the surging incarceration rate in Los Angeles, California and the nation had already been shown to have had no detectable impact on stagnating crime rates (Petersilia 1993).<sup>29</sup>

Unlike in cases of meteorological disasters (such as the hurricanes and floods that periodically ravage the coastal areas of the South or the plains of the Midwest), in which the federal government extends prompt and generous material and financial assistance to victims (who are essentially property owners of the middle and upper classes), in South-Central Los Angeles Washington was content to coordinate charity relief and to encourage private rebuilding and reinvestment efforts. And, although the riot had erupted at the outset of the 1992 presidential campaign, the fate of the urban poor was not deemed worthy of mention by any of the three major candidates for the White House. Stubborn refusal to acknowledge the structural mooring and political import of the uprising gave warrant to continue the policy of state neglect that helped provoke it in the first place (Johnson et al. 1993), and all but guaranteed that the human toll – in terms of fear and despair, crime, incarceration and excess mortality – exacted by urban marginalization would continue to mount unchecked.

The United Kingdom positioned itself about midway between these two poles of politicization and criminalization. The inclination to attribute disorder to a predominantly black 'criminal minority' is always strong; yet, even the staunchly *laissez-faire* governments of Thatcher and Major had to re-establish a degree of state oversight

<sup>29</sup> Another indicator of the American emphasis on the penal sanction of urban disorders is the lopsided approach to narcotics control in the inner city: two-thirds of the 12 billion dollars expended annually by the federal government in its much-vaunted 'War on Drugs' around the turn of the 1990s was allotted to law enforcement, filling custodial establishments to overflowing with petty drug consumers and dealers, while education and treatment services fell behind for lack of funding. The result was a quadrupling of the population incarcerated for drug offences in a decade with no detectable impact on the street commerce and use of narcotics, and a grossly disparate impact on lower-class African-American men (Tonry 1994).

over urban zoning and housing improvement (Cameron and Doling 1994). At the local level, many British cities opted for a two-pronged approach, elaborating more effective policing techniques in order to regain control of the streets at the very outset of a putative riot, on the one hand, and engaging in establishing connections and building trust between the forces of order and the resident populations (under the aegis of 'community policing'), on the other. After the Handsworth riots, for instance, the Birmingham police developed a series of indicators of tension designed to pre-empt the outbreak of violence, and they were able, in collaboration with neighbourhood leaders, to keep young men off the streets when incidents threatened again. But one wonders how long such policies of 'papering over' widening social cleavages can be expected to dampen discontent, especially when the state policy of 'urban regeneration' fostering market mechanisms deepens inequalities within as well as between cities (Le Galès and Parkinson 1993).

### Coda: a challenge to citizenship

The popular disorders and urban protests that have shaken the advanced societies of the capitalist West over the past two decades find their roots in the epochal transformation of their economies (deregulation of financial markets, desocialization of wage work, revamping of labour to impose 'flexibility'), the social polarization of their cities, and state policies that have more or less overtly promoted corporate expansion over social redistribution and commodification to the detriment of social protection.<sup>30</sup> The ruling classes and government elites of rich nations have, to varying degrees, proved unable or unwilling to stem the rise of inequality and marginality. And they have failed to curb the social and spatial cumulation of economic hardship, hopelessness and stigma in the deteriorating working-class neighbourhoods of the dual metropolis. The conjugation of (real or perceived) ethnic divisions and deproletarianization, in declining

<sup>30</sup> As Mollenkopf and Castells (1991: 404) note in the case of the United States, 'the public sector did not play a redistributive and corrective role but amplified the trends toward income inequality, spatial segregation, and lack of adequate services for a large part of the population.' This observation applies in the main to British public policy during that period, though starting from a stronger cushioning role for public institutions. The record for France is more mixed on this count, with different sectors of state action evolving in opposite directions, and indicators of segregation and inequality changing more slowly and modestly.



urban districts deprived of the organizational means needed to forge an emergent identity and formulate collective demands in the political field, promises to produce more unrest and to pose a daunting challenge to the institution of modern citizenship for decades to come.

Citizenship, in T. H. Marshall's ([1949] 1964) famous formulation, serves essentially to mitigate the class divisions generated by the marketplace: it is its extension, from the civil to the political to the socioeconomic realm, that has 'altered the pattern of social inequality' and helped make advanced society relatively pacified and democratic by historical standards.<sup>31</sup> During the postwar era of steady and protected growth, well-bounded and sovereign nation-states were able to establish a clear separation between members and non-members and to guarantee a relatively high degree of congruence between the basic dimensions of membership – with the spectacular exception of African Americans in US society. Today, that ability and congruence are both deeply reduced, so that the hitherto hidden fractures of the space of citizenship are appearing in full light. As the external boundaries and the (real or imagined) internal homogeneity of advanced societies are eroded, from above by high-velocity capital flows and from below by the confluence of the decomposition of the industrial working class and increased immigrant inflows, it becomes increasingly clear that citizenship is not a status achieved or granted once and equally for all, but a contentious and uneven 'instituted process' (to use the language of Karl Polanyi) that must continually be struggled for and secured anew.

Thus the question facing First World countries at the threshold of the new millennium is whether their polities have the capacity to prevent the further contraction and fragmentation of the sphere of citizenship fuelled by the desocialization of labour and, correspondingly, what new mediating institutions they need to invent to provide full access to and active participation in the city, in the double sense of urban setting and *polis*. Failing which, we may witness not only continued urban disorder, collective violence and ethnoracial conflict (actual or imagined) at the heart of the advanced societies, but a protracted process of societal fission and a capillary ramification of

<sup>31</sup> Turner (1986) makes a terse but strong case for the significance of citizenship in dampening the built-in contradictions of advanced society and offers an insightful critical exegesis of Marshall's influential thesis. For a provocative historical reconceptualization of citizenship as an 'instituted process' *à la* Polanyi, see Somers (1993). An exemplary study of cross-national variation in patterns of immigrant incorporation due to differences in the political definition of citizenship is Brubaker (1992).

inequalities and insecurities at the bottom of the order of classes and places.

It is urgent, then, for both scientific and political reasons, to properly diagnose the emerging forms of urban marginality coalescing in districts of dereliction since the breakup of the Fordist-Keynesian compact, which is what this book sets out to do in three steps. The first is to return to the United States, the urban backdrop and model against which European developments have been consistently set and evaluated, to dissect the involution of the black American ghetto after the peaking of the progressive movements of the 1960s. The second is to compare and contrast the forms and experience of persistent poverty in the US metropolis and the French city, so as to examine empirically and clarify theoretically the thesis of the transcontinental convergence of regimes of marginality. The third is to characterize properly the logics of urban polarization from below and to clarify the policy options available to stem it on the threshold of the twenty-first century.