URBAN VIOLENCE:
LESSONS FROM THE INTIFADA AND THE FRENCH BANLIEUES[*]

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Preface

The year 2015 has seen the start of an explicit process in which France, as a nation-state, has become an "external" target for ISIS, Al-Qaida-Maghreb-Islamic, and other terrorist organizations intent on carrying out assassinations in France, acting on their plans, and consequently submitting the French population to constant security threats. The lethal attacks of January 7th and January 8th on Charlie Hebdo and the Hypercasher supermarket and the meticulously coordinated mass murders of November 13th that followed them have radically wounded the collective mindset of the French citizens.

Until this latest chain of terrorist attacks -- which was preceded by a number isolated violent political hate crimes -- the majority of French citizens have only vaguely and cursively considered the question of religious fanaticism to represent a challenge to France. Through the many painful steps from the St Germain Peace Treaty (1570); Saint-Barthelemy massacre(1572; the Nantes Edict (1598) and its revocation (1685); the series of civil wars, the Fronde of 'the League' of ultra-Catholics (1648-1652); the successive abolition of the Clergy revolutionary decrees (1789, 1790, 1793, 1794); the Concordat (1801), down to the zeal of anti-Dreyfus religious reactionaries (1896-1905) – France has ploughed its way towards the legal separation of State and Church (1905 loi de separation de l'église et de l'état (LSEE)).

Today, almost 80% of French public opinion polls reveal a spectrum of beliefs and attitudes ranging from fear of, to rage against, the terrorists and their claim of fighting a Holy War. The once indisputable confidence in the French republican value of *laïcité* as a shield against religious zeal and violence has proven an illusion; the public trust that fanaticism would never re-emerge in France is now shattered.

Also in 2015, a new type of Palestinian anti-Israeli politico-religious violence has swept through Israel and the Palestinian West Bank. So-called 'lone wolf' lethal attacks perpetrated

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[*] This paper was written in 2007 and not revised since then.

by individual youth stabbing with knives civilians, law enforcement officers, and soldiers, ramming cars into them, and in fewer incidents using firearms, have largely been attributed to the fascination of young Muslims with ISIS. Similar single cases have been registered in France, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States. Being facilitated through social media, they resemble the anarchist terrorism of the late 19th and early century more than the mid-20th century revolutionary/ideologically and national liberation driven organised terrorism. While the French and Israeli political regimes are certainly different, in Israel as in France, this escalation of a previously unfamiliar terrorist method – at a very immediate inter-personal level – has unleashed similar reactions in a society where collective consciousness will always remain impregnated a history of exile and by the traumatic Holocaust experience.

We regret to say – the events of 2015 did not take us by surprise. Because we suspected the existence of some common traits shared between the 2005 Paris banlieues riots (followed in other French cities) and the First Palestinian Intifada of 1987, we completed, and presented in 2008, a research paper grappling with the seemingly different phenomena, and comparing them. Seen as almost heretic at the time, the paper identified a Durkheiman anomie, where youth in two different continents and countries, but of a common cultural cradle, find personal and collective agency in violent expression. While an identity vacuum arising from disrupted inter-generational relations and a real or perceived impotence and lack of self-esteem is plain as day, the cause for seeking a violent outlet to this discomfort may be ambiguous. Employing a careful and critical hermeneutic -- an assessment of the significance of words and attitudes -- we traced a trail that exposed a particular, unintended, interaction of social gate-keeper actors in which the phenomenon must be contextualised. The conclusion we arrived at pin-pointed at a rationale that would propel an escalation of the sort of the 2015 massacres in France and 'independent' terrorism in Israel and the West Bank, and which tentatively anticipated them.

Introduction

This paper offers a preliminary assessment of major factors common to a specific type of urban violence in two capital cities: Paris and Jerusalem. Several contextual and circumstantial parallelisms link the experiences of these two cities with political urban violence: Both are set in the tension between West and Orient (Middle East), engage personal and group experiences related to colonialism, involve an inter-generational biological and sociological struggle (youth vs. adult/elderly), and - although of a short-term political and social benefit - appear to be economically counter-productive for both sides clashing in each of these cities. At this preliminary stage of enquiry, we study the character of the events in Jerusalem in the late 1987 and in Paris in the fall of 2005. Can they be said to be expressions of a nascent social movement? Do they suggest the ascent of a universal mode of political change in post-industrial urban centres? Or, are they specific to time, place, and actors involved?

Urban violence of the sort experienced in Paris and Jerusalem may be seen as a certain subset, the lowest threshold of, or the line dividing, the transforming landscape of what used to be understood as revolution, war, civil war, and guerrilla (a few epithets in the larger context of "armed conflict"), on the one hand, and common criminality, on the other hand. Traditionally, urban riots were associated with the latter - criminality, which almost automatically raises localised concerns of socio-political and economic costs to be resolved by way of allocation of resources. Conversely, armed conflict postulates, in addition to economic interests, also socio-political and cultural concerns on a national or international scale (identity, legitimacy). Into which of these categories do the two cases before us belong?

To answer this question, we use the "theory of agency" as a tentative explanation of the development of social movements at the macro level of society. We then apply the theory of "ritual solidarity", which addresses micro level variables, as a complement to the "agency" theory. In the third part, we analyse whether and how the combination of the micro and macro parameters are explicative of the riots in the Paris Banlieues and Jerusalem. In the fourth part, we evaluate and compare the two cases and conclude with observations about the nature of the riots and their transformative effects.

1. The theory of agency: A tentative explanation of urban riot-types of violence from a "macro" viewpoint

Revolutionary movements are macro phenomena composed of human beings and groups of humans acting up in situations whereby masses of people break down an existing social order and replace it by some new form of (powerful) organization, often at the expense of group liberties and individual freedoms. While employing insights developed in the theory of revolutionary movements, we however apply them to explain the rise of *social movements* that have recourse to violent action, by addressing the early stage of riot alone rather than the cumulative process of a revolution.

A theory of revolution must include a genetic account of the typical cycle: Revolutionary initiation by State paralysis; struggle among rival factions of the elite; breakdown (at least partial) of disciplinary forces of law enforcement (police and army); budgetary crisis associated with the strains of security expenditure when control of the geographic over-extended troubles is sought for, etc. (Collins 1992) Mass deprivation and dissatisfaction by themselves do not lead to successful revolutions; to be successful, any revolutionary movement must evoke in its participants a feeling of *agency* - i.e. that its members are "taking control over their own collective destiny". We argue that as an initial stage, this *feeling* in itself already constitutes an ideology because to be successful, social influence by manipulation, domination, and control require favourable emotional conditions. These conditions exist where individuals whose tight networks (of whatever basis) or common characteristics on the one hand, and their sensitivity to the call of leadership, on the other hand, combine to pull them out into street situations filling them with group solidarity and emotional energy. The energy produced encourages them to continue and stick together, and commit acts of a revolutionary nature, which include violent behaviour towards any sign or representative of the "dominating social order".[1]

The structure of the movement may congeal in the tumultuous movement of the masses of people themselves - physical bodies massed up together in the streets, confronting an "enemy". Here resides an organization that could be relatively insignificant (even inoffensive), save the large number of the mass acting in a common direction. Lenin points to the "historical initiative of the mass" as the source enabling the birth of "mass struggle", but he

immediately mentions that masses need to be taught "techniques of insurrection" so that they are not driven only by "spontaneous acts". (1971: 87)

Yet, however powerful the event itself, which is produced by the impetus flowing from the moving masses, revolutionary success is fragile for the spontaneously mobilised mass of demonstrators and protestors may disperse into vain efforts, and fail to overthrow a government. Note, for instance, that the 2005 Banlieue rioters in Paris expressly identified the dismissal of the Minister of the Interior (Nicholas Sarkozy) as the first objective of their movement. However, to sustain such momentum, certain techniques of insurrection must be applied. Evaluating the Paris Commune (1871) Marx noted that, instead of staying stuck inside the city of Paris, "they should have marched immediately to Versailles" (the site of the government of Thiers) and "should have kept the command of the Central Committee" (rather than cancelling it very early on). (Lenin 1971: 89) Furthermore, there must exist an elite within the mass proletariat whose role it was to assess past failures and prepare for the "future struggle" by means of education to create "the conditions for the infallible future success" of mass struggles. (Lenin 1971: 89)

Indeed, the role of a revolutionary elite, or "spear-head" and "avant-guarde of the revolution" is indispensable. The first task of the elite leaders is to coalesce the crowd of individuals divided by diverging interests into a mass united by "the same thought of resistance" against their master. These initially unknown leaders, who also orient the physical flows of the "civil struggle", represent the "agents" (serving an "abstract, divine, metaphysical or ideological" idea/cause) of the civil unrest. They are an elite that preaches ("to preach agency", Collins 1992), is thinking for others, and setting up the rules of the game once a collective body had ripened and is available to be launched into struggle actions. The identification of agents is crucial to the diagnosis of the seeds of a potential social movement as it is born and transforming into a long-term political purposeful set of struggles. Paraphrasing on "no smoke without fire", there is "no social struggle without moving agents" and "no revolution without revolutionary agents".

More specifically, a certain timing, choice of place, and other contextual circumstances must converge to "collectively motorise" the many individuals into a motivated whole, facilitating the dispersed physical bodies' gelling into a mass. As this physical phenomenon repeats itself

at the macro level, it may transform the crowd from a simple mob into a social movement. In other words, the macro approach postulates that some form of *active reflection* originates *before* the transformational events, and matures along them as leaders emerge and structure the movement into a set of meaningful dynamics.

Seen from this Marxist-Leninist macro viewpoint, the demonstrating mobs in Jerusalem and Paris can no longer be considered anonymous crowds. Indeed, shortly following the outbreak of the riots, they transmuted into a mass struggling for political motives, under the stress of "succeeding claims" introduced by the cohesive actions of leaders or "motor elements" that succeeded in uniting in a coalition and building an actual mass struggle. Figures and ideas from the Intifada as well as Banlieue riots suggest that the macro interpretation of the roles of "agents" enabling a movement to structure itself out of sheer apparent improvisation holds reasonably well. In Jerusalem as in Paris, thousands acts of violence - especially fire and stone throwing - were committed with less than a handful of very robust political claims; most actual assertions at the initial stage called for "struggle against", even if the "possessor" or the "powerful" enemies were not yet *clearly* identified. Here notions such as struggle, fight, and claim for justice stand as important structuring and cognitive elements. And since most of the young people acting out in the Intifada and Banlieue incidents were of Muslim background, the possibility of a connection between the tenor of those calls and the exigency of Jihad should not be dismissed off hand.[2]

Jihad may be translated as a quest for spiritual growth. Numerous Muslim associations and brotherhood streams interpret it as demanding such an individual and even ascetic approach. Nevertheless, the bulk of the vocal so-called Islamist movement today insists on the need for an "external struggle" to assert a Muslim identity in opposition to the degeneration of the "infidels". This is particularly disconcerting in secular societies such as the French Republic, and regarding the religious stream of the Intifada in the territories occupied by the semi-secular State of Israel.[3]

Secularism stands for the "indifference to, rejection or exclusion of, religious considerations" into the realm of politics and political life in a country and/or human society. French legislated secularism ("laicité") (1905; 1958) was re-affirmed to represent a core value of the country, "a political system which excludes churches and religious bodies from the exercise of any

political power, especially from public administrations" (French vote 2004). Israel's 1948 Declaration of Independence is largely secular, seeking to iron out church-state contradictions. In a secular society, religious leadership - although powerful, plays a supportive (or critical), yet not political governance leadership, role. To the extent that the global and totalitarian requirements of orthodox Islam collide with the exclusive notions of secularism promoted both in France and in Israel (and arguably also within the Palestinian Occupied Territories), there exists a risk that any collectively felt grievance by a crowd on either side of the equation (religious Islam or secular) may at any moment emerge as the locus from where "agents" arise to lead the concerned masses.

Thus, the theory of agency suggests an explanation of how the spontaneously acting mob may transform from a socio-political disenfranchised under-class into an active social movement whose aim is to ultimately gain political recognition. The theory of agency proffers that the demonstration events of the Intifada and Banlieue did not suddenly fall out from nowhere. Only by agency could a mob in Clichy-sous-bois transform into a mass struggling nightly over three weeks long; require major police control to be installed at a "state of emergency"; and necessitate curfews over a quarter of the territory of France, in order to contain the violence. Arguably, the Paris Banlieue movement at that point was already harbouring some ingrained reflexiveness "that is worth considering, so that one could preach agency". (Collins 1992: 84) Similarly, the Intifada required a deep-seated despondency for agency to be able to sustain the spontaneous revolts and transform them into a powerfully structured movement capable of stultifying governments. Thus, "agency" represents this particular elite phenomenon that enabled the conversion of some unexpected accidents (car accident in Gaza; electrocution in Clichy) and spontaneous reactions into a lasting association of people who organized active days and nights of impressive social struggle.

Brief, the macro approach shows the transformation of local events and neighbourhood mobs into national politics and class struggles - where the word "class" stands for its original meaning - an organized and qualified social group. The macro aspect of the Intifada and Banlieue represents the rising of social shocks hitting civil society - not from local mobs acting out of pure spontaneous inspiration - but rather from struggling masses mobilised by an idealized prospect of "winning over domineering colonial powers" or "defeating the infidels".

2. Ritual solidarity, initiation, and enforcement: A hypothesis at the micro level

Emile Durkheim's theory refers the phenomenon of "ritual interaction" where human interaction is mediated by the physical senses (body and language) and results in a strong feeling of belonging shared by a group of human beings. The ensuing group feels entrusted with a moral righteousness empowering it to act as one whole in order to defend its cause. This sense of "wholeness" may turn violent when finding validation at the face of strong opposition, especially in street demonstrations. Ritual interaction fosters positive feedback loops, based upon what Durkheim called "collective conscience", "moral order", and the "impossibility of anomie". (Collins 2005)

Building upon Durkheim's intuition, Erwin Goffman's studies of everyday life behaviour show how any social order exists at the micro level, enforced not by law, but by much more powerful mechanisms such as the urge for conformity and the need to please the social norms. (Collins 2005) Routines and conformity as well as individual stigmata and "markings", construct a presentation of the Self that is almost always fraught with unspoken strong conventions heavily abundant in any given social setting.

At the micro level, rites (formal constraints of behaviour including enforcement) as prescribed ceremonial acts or experiences - play a role in at least three respects. (Eliade 1959) First, the foundation of rites in any civil society is construed as embedded in subservience to the sacred character of the "homo religiosus", which is part of each of us. This entrenched, somewhat unconscious, belief runs as a conviction throughout the micro level and is found in the bond of an extended family or a small group of dwellers. It represents a "centre of the world", and we might know it if we respect certain rituals of a religious (or quasi-religious) nature. Second, rites of initiation are instrumental in structuring how people - and especially youngsters - see life and death. Young people are psychologically and emotionally closer to the radical, essential, and primitive truth that in order to live, any human must undergo some kind of initiation - most of it mediated by religion and/or ideology. Such initiation has therefore much to do with an explanation of the world at a micro level. And third, to a certain extent, rites provide a way to indirectly express the "rules of the game", and represent a powerful way to enforce what Douglass North (1990) calls "constantly imperfect" and even irrational solutions to practical issues (especially in the area of economic sustenance).

At a micro level, rites are therefore the roots of collective conscience, moral order and resistance to anomie. If anomie is defined as the social illness by which the social order is destroyed for lack of norms, values, and references to the law, then this explains the outbreak of the Intifada and Banlieue riots. It provides the researcher with yet another perspective of the demonstrations, namely by paying attention to how demonstrating people "feel emotionally driven by rituals" even if they are not aware of it at all. If - within a small area called a "quartier difficile" in Paris, or the interface between the Gaza Strip and Israel - the very notion of a struggle for identity and/or existence is being identified as the centre core of the fights between a demonstrating youngsters' group defying police and army forces, then it has the potential to create the conditions for a sustainable and conservative specific ritual of struggles. If the value of local (religious or cultural) rites is more compelling than that of enforcement by the forces of social order (French, Israeli police and army, or Palestinian establishment), then young people so believing, and demonstrating by violent acts, might consider themselves on a perfectly justified track with respect to the community they belong to. If the young rioters consider their local surrounding social order, i.e. the urban space (including refugee camps) in the Palestinian Territories occupied by Israel or France as oppression; and if they are disappointed by their surrounding secular main stream society - not only the dominant French and Israeli ethnic group, but also within their own (Arab, African, and Palestinian, and largely of Muslim faith), then they themselves alone are to bear collective consciousness, represent moral order, and resist the anomie of the institutions of the country and society in which they "happen to live".

The notion of "ritual solidarity" goes even one step deeper. By coupling rites with solidarity, an instance of synergistic association is created: Within the macro context of a crowd (say, on Paris streets), micro attitudes of altruism and solidarity among participants who share the same religion and socio-political and cultural marginality, may transform into a lever able to considerably amplify the collective strength and magnitude of actions. Even if people do not know each other beforehand, they may commit violence together at a high degree of self-coordination, and disperse afterwards without any sense of remorse. When you demonstrate along a fellow religious worshipper, or a (similarly to you) disgruntled marginalised member of society, you do it in forms of ritual solidarity. The line separating the "us" versus "them" is being demarcated; you treat your anonymous fellow as you would your usual neighbour, and you spontaneously consider your relationships both friendly and at par. There is no need here

to have a super-imposed leader to structure your actions, since they flow naturally from the requirements of the situation of struggle, when you fight "alike".

Demonstrating in the streets, burning cars and throwing stones do not imply that people know each other beforehand; but where they share emotions and solidarity at a micro level, a serial occurrence of violence can develop without anyone questioning from within the group. And then next, urban violent acts grow out of the stage of violence within the realm of ritual solidarity as conservative cognitive practices uncovered at the micro-level are seized upon by agents transforming the energy released into acts "for macro political change", whatever those may be. Moreover, if this hypothesis on the micro source of urban violence is not rebuked by actual facts, then one could infer that the acting out of violence would occur by bursts and sudden episodes, rather than gradually by rational deliberations "for there is no previous pattern to emulate or introduce the transformation".(Collins 1992)

Micro and macro conditions often interplay at the level of empirical description. (Eliade 1959) Our question then is whether social patterns at the macro level have anything to do with these "micro" constraints on the behaviour of individuals? Is it possible to say that the uprisings and struggles of populations under conditions of surprise and uncertainty (e.g. the Paris Banlieues and Intifada) reflect certain characters of a "micro" level "ritual interaction type" of solidarity, and to what extent? Do ritual interactions at the local level, conventions of behaviour and their enforcement, as well as stigmata, interfere or coincide with the occurrence of macro events (e.g. mass street demonstrations)?

In conclusion, our hypothesis suggests that urban violence movements such as the Intifada, originating in the Gaza Strip and quickly spreading elsewhere including Jerusalem, and the Paris Banlieue, are based on both micro ritualistic and conservative solidarities and macro agent roles. Combining ritual solidarity at the micro level (sufficient condition of incidents of urban violence) with agency operating at the macro level (necessary condition), one gets the precise requisite and sufficient powerfulness crucial to throw a country like France or Israel into disorder and re-assessment. It then becomes self-evident that the statistical imbalance in figures - in the Banlieue case, 15,000 youngsters able to cause enduring troubles for the 20 million people living in the major cities of France; in the Intifada - dramatic consequences by a few hundreds of rioters only, overshadows a profound social affliction.

3. How the macro and micro levels intermingled in the of Paris Banlieue (2005) and Jerusalem Intifada (1987)

3. 1. Paris and Jerusalem

The two capital cities were chosen because of their political symbolic value. Our analysis is designed to offer an introductory snapshot of two situations where the break out of riots coincided with the birth of social movements (each embedded within a broader political "hinterlands", which we only partly address here). Our sources for the Intifada are predominantly Israeli, but include, and refer to, Palestinian (primary and secondary) and other sources as well. The sources of the Paris Banlieue analysis are more recent, primary and secondary, and reflect three main and different streams of interpretation - from Muslim observers, Leftist Internet observers, and the *French* intelligentsia. We confine our study in time and geographical space in order to sharpen the focus of the preliminary assessment of major factors common to the beginning of a specific type of urban violence in the two capital cities.

3. 2. Jerusalem

3.2.1. The micro level in Jerusalem's Intifada

3.2.1.1. How the Intifada broke out in Jerusalem

A severe car accident (December 8, 1987) was the spark that ignited the Intifada. (Shiff and Ya'ari, 1990) An Israeli truck hit a car of Gazan Palestinians, four Palestinian passengers were killed and others severely wounded. Immediately, rumours spread out connecting the Israeli driver with another Israeli who, two days earlier, was stabbed to death in the Gaza central market. The evening funeral developed into the beginning of a riot where old and young attacked the Israeli army and border guard by hurling stones and Molotov cocktails. Unlike previous incidents, it lasted late into the night. The following day was soon to be known as the first day of the Intifada.

All of the action happened spontaneously in the Gaza Strip, spreading over to Nablus and Ramallah, catching up in Jerusalem, where it became premeditated and planned only eleven days later. Worried by the impulsiveness and disorder which characterised the first week of the riots, a Ramallah resident, collaborating with Gazans, orchestrated the Jerusalem riots in order to re-align its residents and capitalise on the bubbling energy. The Jerusalem outburst was to coincide with the state visit by the Italian President Francesco Cossiga. The Arab commercial quarter of East Jerusalem outside the Old City was effectively cordoned off by burning barricades, while streams of protesters filled the main traffic arteries, nearing Jewish neighbourhoods, targeting Israeli banks, municipality vehicles, and an Israeli restaurant - but also Palestinian neighbourhoods and refugee camps - all the while throwing stones and Molotov cocktails. Two days later, the riots spread to the neighbouring villages in the greater vicinity of Jerusalem not sparing Palestinian institutions from the wrath.

3.2.1.2. The beginning of the Intifada as a spark

Observers of the Intifada as well as actors involved in the dynamics of the early events (Palestinian activists, leaders, and Israeli officials) agree that the first month of the Intifada represented a unique stage in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination (Schiff and Ya'ari, 1990). All actors were taken by surprise. From here opinions diverge as to the cardinal characteristics of this ''cathartic'' phenomenon. The exposure of Israel's vulnerability and weakness propelled a tremendous psychological group effect, a turning point of Palestinian public empowerment. The spark unleashed wide ranging ramifications, feeding into the macro level of Palestinian politics and cementing the Intifada as a historically important, even critical, lever in the external circles engulfing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The Intifada amounted to a ''symbolic declaration day'' of the Israeli-Palestinian communitarian conflict, a conflict characterized by a relationship of ''intimate hostility''.(Benvenisti 1992: 65, 70-71)

The delay in the Jerusalem eruption of the Intifada is explained the Jerusalem-particular demographic, socio-economic, and political characteristics. Yet, in spite of its orchestration, it still qualifies as an immediate link in a chain reaction to the Gazan spark, not an overall premeditated plan. The highly symbolic value of Jerusalem served as the crowning of the *outbreak* of the riots, the initial period of the Intifada.

The term Intifada has several meanings. Literally, it means the shiver seizing the one suffering of extremely high fever; alternatively, it represents a movement whereby a dog shakes off ticks and flees; in its political context, it has been known as just "shaking off". Common to these meanings is the notion of "rupture", which formed as a tidal wave building up from the epicentre of Gaza. While it might not have achieved its seismic dimension had Jerusalem - where the micro and the macro levels converged to create a social movement - been left out, the fact that it developed at such a primordial level, as a peoples' spark, must be explained by a micro level examination. Indeed, the web of human relations specific to Jerusalem figures as an important factor in magnifying the Intifada beyond mere riots.

3.2.1.3.   Ritual solidarity

As mentioned earlier, a theory of revolution must include a genetic account of the cycle typical of this phenomenon. In this section, we focus on the first stage, the revolutionary initiation coinciding with the paralysis of the State. While the initial birth of "agency" residing in the physical bodies amassed together in the streets, defending their cause by confronting "a collective enemy" characterizes the situation in the Gaza Strip on December 9, 1987, the situation in Jerusalem represents a mix of a spontaneous snow ball effect soon "scooped up" by "rational" mobilization of the erupting "emotional capital". Thus, the Jerusalem riots are already at the stage of "reflexiveness" reverberating as waves multiplying the "agency" effect.

In the initial urban violence,[4] the absence of conventional fire arms, in fact, turning the back on the "armed struggle", was conspicuous. (Schiff and Ya'ari 1990) This represented a unique exception for a region with quite a different history. Throwing stones and Molotov cocktails, improvising arms out of engine parts, bicycle chains, and spiking potatoes with nails are a few examples. The flyers which became an essential tool in the steering of the Intifada were almost all circulated (and most likely written) *after* the first month when reflecting the internal power struggles within the Intifada's leadership. (Mishal and Aharoni 1989).[5] The urban violence unfolded by trends of protest activity called for in the flyers: Violence, disengagement, disobedience, and solidarity in activity. While the main two rival movements - the Islamic Hamas and the Intifada's coalition called United National Command (UNC) - differed in their encouragement of violence, an overall steady and statistically significant rise in violent, compared to non-violent, instructions is discernible throughout the history of the

flyers. During the first month alone, 26 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces, and 320 wounded, two third of them in the ages of 17-29. 56 Israeli soldiers and 30 Israeli civilians were wounded from stones and bottles thrown at, and hitting, them. 1412 different protest activities took place, including stone throwing, tire burning, and the setting up of barricades. At least 109 Molotov cocktails were hurled, improvised explosives, 12 arson cases, and 3 incidents of use of hand grenades, were documented. Until January 9, 1988, 270 Palestinians were arrested for security and terrorism related offenses. (Shiff and Ya'ari 1990: 102) Shortly thereafter, as the impact of the economic cost of the Intifada became apparent, a consistent reduction in flyers calling for disengagement and weakening of the economic relations with Israel was noticed. (Mishal and Aharoni, 1989)

Thus, at the backdrop of the consistent "failure of other means" (terrorism, conventional war, general strikes, diplomacy, etc.) over years of Palestinian struggle for self-determination, urban violence has now become a cathartic lever. The history of the Palestinian struggle is however insufficient in explaining how and why urban violence picked up steam. (Mishal and Aharoni 1989) Rather, it is that particular sense of collective solidarity which gelled at the very beginning of the riots, nourished by the *chronic* and *endemic* nature of "communitarian conflict" (Benvenisti 1992: 25), which explains the transition to consolidation of the Intifada. The "intimate hostility" connecting Palestinians and Israeli Jews (Benvenisti 1992: 71), the battle fought not just on the physical level, in the urban streets, but more intensely reflected on the TV screen, and its impact on local and foreign public opinion (Benvenisti 1992) were feeding on already extant emotional conditions, ripe to be ignited by sudden strokes of mighty decentralized urban violence. And the tide was reinforced by means of a Goffmanian sociological "performance" as the real actors watched themselves and their actions replayed over and over again on TV. Indeed, much of the urban violence was later orchestrated for TV consumption, after the initial outburst.

A socio-economic portrait of the actors during the first days of the Intifada suggests that above all - this was truly an all communitarian outburst of frustration, a rebellion of the "raging proletariat" - economically and not politically ignited. (Schiff and Ya'ari 1990) Most of the early arrested rioters were politically ignorant, either unaware of, or unfamiliar with, the contents of the Palestinian Charter; not considering themselves soldiers in an armed struggle; and rather preoccupied with the hardship and challenges of daily life, not even bothering to

follow the news.(Shiff and Ya'ari 1992) It was not even a mob of youngsters, or university, or high school students, but rather menial workers with only primary education part of whom were daily wage earners for large families, "freshmen" in political protest (the role of women and young girls was also impressive at this early stage). Most worked in Israel and spoke Hebrew reasonably well and shared a common personal sense of victimhood, complaining of maltreatment by their Israeli employers or co-workers and by the Israeli security forces. (Shiff and Ya'ari 1992) They exuded the long lasting frustration caused by "double discrimination" - economic and political - a tinder box awaiting explosion. (Gilbar and Susser 1992: 12)

It is important to note the clear distinction between Gaza and the rest of the Palestinian society under occupation. (Frisch's 1992) Largely populated by refugees, a-patrie without citizenship, economically (and politically) lagging well behind their relatively prosperous West Bank and Jordanian citizen compatriots, explains the early psychological and economic motivations of the rioters. Therefore, whether the solidarity of a raging *proletariat* was the straw that broke the camel's back in Jerusalem, where a delayed Intifada engulfed residents enjoying rights denied to the rest of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories, is debateable. Consequently, we prefer the explanation that the Jerusalem catharsis emerged out of the deep seated common sense of humiliation felt by Palestinians in Jerusalem, maybe even stronger than their despair of, and resentment to, being unsuccessful in achieving self-determination.

Regardless of any built-in bias in the various surveys and reports that chronicled the outburst of the Intifada, the imprint left on the Palestinian psyche and minds is a characteristic common to all accounts. It was as though an alarm clock was ticking in every Palestinian's soul in the Occupied Territories (Mohammed Nasser quoted in Schiif and Ya'ari 1990) intrinsically instilling in each individual a drive to action, free of any external encouragement. This sensation however was short lived.

3.2.2. The role of agency in the Intifada: The macro level

3.2.2.1.   The perpetual but transforming nature of the Palestinian agency

Although ignited "by accident", the Intifada forms part of a larger and historically old context. The Palestinian national movement has typically stretched between two extremes: Insistence

on the independence of the movement versus dependence on external Arab actors. (Gilbar and Susser 1992) The Intifada represented an effort to "shake off" external dependency, but also reliance on the internal traditional leadership which entertained this relationship. It resulted in the legal, administrative, and fiscal disengagement of Jordan from the West Bank and simultaneously compelled the PLO leadership to respond to the pressures and reward the rebels' sacrifice by translating it into political achievement.[6] Moreover, during its first year, the Intifada effected the Palestinian declaration of independence (November 1988). Furthermore, it broke the PLO's years' long resistance to power sharing with the crystallisation of the United National Command (UNC) in January 1988. (Frisch 1992) "The PLO did not initiate the events in the Territories, but jumped on the bandwagon", (Schiff and Ya'ari 1990: 11) misdiagnosing (along with the Israeli leadership) the severity of the hardship suffered by the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. The traditional "constrained radicalism"[7] characteristic of the Palestinian leadership style was challenged by violent escalation on the part of youngsters well before the Intifada; it was however critically ruptured only through the Intifada's outbreak. (Mishal and Aharoni 1989)

Not only did old political and ideological rivalries divide the Palestinian "agents"; the agents were also organised by social status defined tasks and functions, including local Palestinian dignitaries, some affiliated with the previous Jordanian regime, who tried to pacify the situation. An important schism - between secular and religious leaderships - resurfaced during the Intifada as social dignitaries warned the religious leader against permitting their mosques to become loci of unruly agitation. (Mishal and Aharoni 1989) The youngsters' defiance against, and disrespect of, the old guard spread like bushfire. The latter's attempt to join in the protest by traditional means failed squarely. This time, grandmothers, merchants, labourers, and students - to name a few - joined in the rebellion.

Unlike the urban West Bank and Jerusalem leadership, religious agents who were mainly based in the Gaza Strip, were quick to seize on the events and secure themselves a central role in the Gazan developments early on. By the summer, they expanded their influence into the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Similar to the practise and experience of the Muslim religious establishment elsewhere, the network commanded by the religious Gazan leaders proved an instrument of mobilisation significantly more efficient than the secular movement. (Schiff and Ya'ari 1990) Particularly, the rise of the Muslim (Islamist) Hamas organisation has come to

represent one conspicuous outcome of the Intifada. In fact, ever since 1987, its political clout has grown in the Israeli-Palestinian equation.

Finally, a unique agent who pre-existed the Intifada, the Palestinian-American and Christian Dr. Mubark Aouad, left an indelible mark on the events. Unnoticeably, his message of civil disobedience was percolating into Palestinian society overriding his marginality, even the disrespect he was subjected to, prior to the Intifada. Once the turn of events required a shift away from spontaneous protest and re-direction into newly organised resistance, the UNC expediently adopted entire sections of his doctrine (albeit deleting the non-violence elements of his writing) parading them as central objectives of the Intifada. (Schiff and Ya'ari 1990)

Early in the Intifada (the "revolution of stones" as it became known), a new leadership established itself in the now vacant space. The PLO's determination to dominate the challenging UNC, the role of other Palestinian national organisations (socialist, Muslim, etc.) and the interference by their central commands with the UNC, as well as the UNC's underground existence (constantly persecuted by Israeli authorities) undermined the ascending leadership from taking over power.(Schiff and Ya'ari 1990) Nevertheless, the secrecy enveloping the UNC, combined with its ability to regularly issue flyers and manifestos, dictated respect and obedience. Arguably, because almost from its inception it was plagued with internal stresses and confrontations, scholars were divided as to the role played by these agents, particularly the weight of the new and local versus the old leadership. They however concur that the motor of the Intifada resided in solidarity created spontaneously among ordinary Palestinians from the middle class and radical youth.

3.2.2.2.   The symbolism of Jerusalem

As home to the scared sites of the three monotheistic religions, violent incidents in Jerusalem have always demanded a unique approach. Therefore, the fact that Jerusalem was pulled into the Intifada was no surprise for it has long represented the commercial, social, cultural, and political hub of the West Bank, being the largest Palestinian city in Israel and the Occupied Territories (25% percent of Jerusalem's total population). Its unilateral re-unification by Israeli legislation (1967) consequently exempting its Palestinian residents from Marshal Law, did not diminish their particular religious and national attachment to the city. The long hailed

co-existence of Israeli Jews and Palestinian Christians and Muslims in Jerusalem, of residents unequal in their civil rights (Israelis - citizens, Palestinians - municipal residents), emerged too fragile to withstand the pressure, and during the Indifada, East Jerusalem (the Palestinian part) reverted to a *de facto* occupation. By definition, therefore, the Intifada - originally a socio-economic outburst - was visibly coloured by religious tones, and Jerusalem - serving as unifying banner. The city's singularity explains also why at the outbreak of the Intifada there, the Israeli police was strictly forbidden from using live ammunition. Consequently, for two entire months there was not one fatal incident in Jerusalem that could be attributed to the riots. (Benvenisti 1992) The situation changed as the roles of the agents evolved and became compounded during a lengthy Intifada, often pitching the nationalist and socialist streams dominating the West Bank and Jerusalem against the Muslim religious camp prevailing in Gaza.

3. 3. Paris

3.3.1. Micro level and ritual solidarity in Paris' Banlieue riots

3.3.1.1. How the Banlieue riots broke out

Rage in the Banlieue was triggered by a very casual incident involving youngsters and the police in Clichy-sous-bois (Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, fifteen kilometres north of Paris) on October 27th, 2005. It could have remained a commonplace occurrence typical of populated suburban neighbourhoods where police carries out ID checks on young people hanging around to have some "fun". This time, however, a group of approximately ten male teenagers gathering to play soccer and trying to get into a contractor's shed in an urban construction lot, were chased out by two teams of policemen. While six of the youngsters were arrested almost immediately, three managed to escape to a near-by cemetery, but were electrocuted when climbing a high electric transformer. Two boys were burnt to death, one survived. When the firemen arrived at the site, a mob was already awaiting, shouting "Dismiss Sarkozy" and hurling stones at them. Two hours later, police was dispatched to the area, and the following night would become the first in a series of "hot nights". An immediate word of mouth via cell phones and Internet accused the police of flagrant provocation and for causing

the teenagers' death. Consequently, pent up anger and rebellion exploded in Clichy-sous-bois in the name of justice against police violence.

During the first night, several dozens of teenagers of Clichy-sous-bois burned 23 cars, two fire trucks, and the local Post Office. The following night, the movement spread to nearby Montfermeil where hundreds of youngsters put cars on fire and fought both police and firemen. This agitation continued throughout the next two nights, when a tear-gas grenade hurled by police exploded during a prayer meeting at the Mosque of Clichy-sous-bois. Immediately interpreted as aggression targeting the neighbouring Muslim communities, it was followed by a full-scale upheaval in the Paris Banlieues, spreading from the Seine-Saint-Denis Department to three other districts around Paris (Seine-et-Marne, Yvelines, and Val d'Oise areas), all heavily populated by a Muslim majority. On the nights of November 1-7, the riots engulfed major French cities, and the toll exacted an average of 100 to 400 cars burnt per night. Not only cars but schools, libraries, and post offices were put on fire as well as private businesses such as a large Renault car-dealership and other garages. Looting was the exception rather than the rule; occasionally happening during the riots near commercial centres, it remained at the margin of the movement, which was never considered to be run by gangs or common criminals. The riots deteriorated into the deliberate causing of bodily harm when a black woman riding a public bus was heavily burnt, and a retired man, in a Paris Banlieue, watching out of his apartment and seeking to prevent the burning of cars, was attacked by teenagers and died. Consequently, the Villepin government decided on November 8th to apply the State of Emergency measure (first invoked during the Algerian War). Intended to remain in effect for nine days, and in 25 Departements only, it was extended on November 18th for three more months. Although the riots actually ceased on November 20th, President Chirac ended the state of emergency only on January 10th, 2006.[8]

3.3.1.2. Ritual Solidarity

The 2005 statistics available suggest that some form of "ritual solidarity" was at work in those hot nights in the Banlieues. From data based on 4,770 arrests (90% males), it appears that the young people were organized into groups numbering 10-50 persons, very mobile, and well familiar with the buildings and streets occupied, as well as hiding places. Most were males wearing black garments and (some) dark masks, and were almost totally free, quite invisible

in their movements. A quarter of the rioters were teenagers (1,200 "minors"), and half - young adults (19 to 27). The few girls participating stayed in the background, inside buildings, providing logistical support. Interestingly, almost no youngsters showed up in hospitals, apparently preferring home or places where friends would take care of them. This represents one manifestation of the solidarity bondage playing such an extremely important role among the involved youngsters.

Eighty percent of the rioters were of immigrant descent - second-generation immigrants (70%) and so-called "sans-papiers" without ID cards (10%). Immigration thus added another foundation for solidarity, bridging over differences in ethnicity, yet also triggering distinction - the associations of Black Africans, who realized they shared skin colour and interests, whatever their countries of origin.

Diminishing parental authority was reflected in fathers' ambiguous attitude toward the riots, and their inability to control the young. Even the so-called "big brother effect" remained ineffective as most elder brothers themselves joined in the riots. At the family level, complicity with rioters was the rule rather than the exception. Religious authorities (mainly Muslim mullahs) maintained ambiguity during the period of October 27th to November 9th, which preceded the declaration of a state of emergency. Only afterwards did they start preaching against violence, albeit while justifying the young rioters' cause. Consequently, Fatwas (condemnations) were pronounced censuring urban violence and effecting the abrupt cessation of the riots on November 20th. Especially significant and effective was the fatwa promulgated by the French National Union of Muslims (U.O.I.F), which allowed the then Interior Minister Sarkozy to later refer to the issuers as his "Muslim friends".

Finally, both rites-in-place and rites-of-time moulded the solidarity among the rioters. The "places" of gathering were TV sets in apartment buildings' basements where events of the previous nights, amplified in broadcasts on the major channels, were debriefed and assessed for "success". The "time" of ritual came during the late afternoon rehearsal and dressing up, in preparation for the coming night's "performance".

Even if it is impossible to assess the extent and importance of solidarity "rites for rioters", it appears that a powerful idealization of common bonds (similar pattern of destiny) evolved in

the youngsters' imagination. They considered themselves as "les indigènes de la République" uniting in full solidarity against a traditional France which stood beyond their reach, symbolising an unattainable, unequal, and unacceptable society. To the bystanders, the Banlieue riots served as a form of "prise de conscience", a forbearance that local solidarity might be the harbinger of national troubles.

3.3.1.3 - *Merde in France*: Three prevalent interpretations of the Paris Banlieue riots

Three competing lines of interpretation of the 2005 Paris Banlieue riots are dominant: Jihad or not Jihad focusing on political and institutional explanations, revolution in Paris concentrating on socio-economic factors, and the French intelligentsia's contemplation of renewal for an all Republican civil society.

Jihad or not Jihad ? "Jihad" means to strive, to persevere, but popularly is also known to mean waging a holy war to convert non-believers to Islam. Jihad in the latter meaning represents the sixth pillar of the Islamic faith as introduced during the first generation following the Prophet Muhammad, who is believed to have said when returning from his last battle: "We are finished with the lesser Jihad: now we are starting the greater Jihad".

Some observers of the Banlieue riots were wondering whether there was an element of Jihad in the October-November 2005 riots, and hypothesised that the situation resembled the beginning of a "war". ("Jihad in France?") Could the Paris riots have been fuelled by some belief and concurring emotions that the death of two youngsters of Muslim descent mandated avenging against the "infidels"? Since 80% of the rioters were of Muslim descent, it is important to listen to Muslim observers' and scholars' comments on the riots. Although refraining from any claim that "Jihad" served as reference to the rioters, it nevertheless transpires that a strong sense of a *political* struggle against a situation of exploitation and injustice coupled with the belief that it could be successful in future years, united the rioters. Three typical texts, albeit not exhaustive, reflect this politicisation. While two authors locate the root causes of the riots in the particular institutional system of the French Republic and its inefficiency compared with the UK or the USA, a third commentator identifies the riots as the origin of a new political movement that could later evolve into a definite opposition to the French system. None of these observations offered by Muslims considers Jihad to be a

contributive factor since the riots are attributed exclusively to the carelessness of the authorities.

During the riots, Ali Hassan, a student at the prestigious Paris Ecole Normale Supérieure, lamented on "how little anyone cared". (Hassan, 2005) The next year, Mustafa Dicek published an essay on the institutional weakness of the Republican imagery (and therefore of the French State), source of the formation of ghettos, ethnic separatism, and Islamic fundamentalism, dating back to the 1990s and transforming these neighbourhoods into what has come to be called "the threat of Banlieues", a menacing external and foreign area within the very interior of France. (Dicek 2006: 162) Comparing 2005 with the May 1968 riots, he discarded any interpretation based on the "alleged religious" (Muslim) faith of most of the rioters.

The third observation raised the question which was hovering in the background but remained largely unarticulated: Was it possible that there existed some form of political predilection within the very movement of rioters? And if so, would the notion of Jihad be the proper substitute for the expression "external fight"? In late 2005, Abdelalli Hajjat, a graduate form the Institut d'études politiques de Lyon, offered his own account of the Banlieue riots: "The French popular suburbs are not a political desert […]. The popular suburbs could be an important source of real political power, and this could show results in the 2008 municipal elections. If developments continue over the coming months, it will become necessary to put forward a clear political project". (Abdelalli 2005)

Revolution in Paris. 　　　　According to this second line of argumentation of revolution in Paris - poverty and isolation coalesced into collective action and resourcefulness in provoking a revolution. Typical of this revolutionary interpretation by Toni Negri was the confirming tenor of essays from the Anarchist Federation "No Pasaran" and left Marxist immigrants ("Nous les zonards voyous") published amidst the Banlieue riots. In Negri's eyes, the Banlieue riots reflected a struggle which although historically very important remained insufficiently ripe and unstructured to emerge into a full-fledged revolution for "what is [still] missing is a political consciousness of objectives, what Marx called 'the revolution for itself'". (Jacoboni 2005) This finds an echo in a somewhat violent text by the Anarchist Federation, exclaiming that "[w]e have not signed any social contract, we are not 'citizens' of this society [...]. The

riots have proven one thing: you have to be as violent as possible in this shit society if you want to break through the social apathy. […]Politicize your worries, you will worry the politicians! Capitalism will not fall by itself, let's help it!". ("The Fuse Is Lit!")

Finally, echoing Negri's analysis, a left Marxist immigrants' text proclaimed:

> We, the third generation [Muslim immigrants], burned the symbols of integration. Supermarkets, cultural centres, cars. […] But who has to integrate whom? And how? A disintegrating society cannot claim to integrate anything [...]. We did not burn 'our cars' - cars which we do not own, but those of the inner and outer belts. […] We did not burn our schools, but those of the Republic […]. We did not burn our shops but the McDonald's […]. This year we burned 30,000 cars [about 80 per night], the forecast for next year is 40,000 since the riot provoked a greater jump in the statistical curve. ("Nous, les Zonards voyous")

Resembling revolutionary declarations, such texts reflect more than mere instinctive and immediate emotional outburst associated merely with the riots. Rather, they suggest that Anarchism and Marxism mingle with ghetto analysis to articulate a new "Lumpenproletariat" of young working-class immigrants able and willing to ignite riots up to an unanticipated level - even greater than the 2005 Banlieue troubles. Are these signs of an active reserve of "sleeping revolutionaries" awaiting an opportunity to mobilise a "new proletariat" from the Paris Banlieue in future and successive similar models of systematized urban violence?

French intelligentsia.   A third line of interpretation relies on an analysis of the riots as representing "un-civic" acts designed to restore a sense of capacity in the French institutions, which are expected to empathise with, and prevent the daily threats that "ordinary" people fall victim to. Accordingly, the riots were spontaneous, signalling collective discomfort, and hence preventable by education towards adherence to the principles of civility under a Republican regime. This view, which emphasises the external characteristics of the rioters, blames the French social system of an occlusion effectively causing the exclusion of young immigrants. France must find a suitable way to urgently "incorporate" a critical mass of young people who are otherwise capable of gathering political strength and adjust its state organs so as to enable the "conversion" of young immigrants into believers in the Republican ideals. For the intelligentsia, the Banlieue riots represented a second-generation immigrant protest against a society that precluded them from engagement in the French discourse on integration. (Roy 2005).

The expression "merde in France" articulated the unsettling effect of the 2005 Banlieue riots on the French intelligentsia's conventional wisdom regarding the politics of the suburbs. Converging into a rejection of the distinction between the "mob" and the "real youth" (by Sarkozy), but also admitting the joint failure by the Left and Right in dealing with Banlieue issues, it sought to emphasize the power intrinsic to Republican values in overcoming this crisis, (Peyrat 2007, Gaudu 2006, Poy 2006) placing its trust in a multicultural dream incorporated within the Republican ideal.

3.3.2. The role of "agents" in the Banlieue riots: The macro perspective

The significance of Paris as the root of the riots must be underlined. In fact, almost a year and a half after the Banlieue riots, a new burst of violence followed at the railway station Gare du Nord (in downtown *intra-muros* Paris) serving as terminal for all trains coming from the Seine-Saint-Denis Banlieue where the 2005 riots broke out. Most French interpretations consider the Banlieue riots as spontaneous, resulting from a frustrated and desperate "lost youth" that needs just to be re-directed back on the right, i.e. Republican, track. Contrary to this construction, we offer an interpretation according to which Paris symbolises the place that must be "conquered" by way of permanent troubles. According to our hypothesis, the 2005 riots were not a one-time, passing event but the sign of a growing organized force of revolt that may strike Paris – and consequently France - over and over again in the years to come. We see several reasons for this argument, all converging in the role of Paris, and agency, as the key factors propelling a social movement.

Historically, Paris has always exerted leverage on French political life, from the Middle-Ages to this day. Moreover, historically, the French political system has been continuously and intensively centralized. Like so many capital cities, Paris represents not merely an administrative centre and a symbol of national identity but epitomises the place of high command and pride. At the same time, it serves a living vestige marking the importance of revolutions and social upheavals in France. The 1968 youth revolt was set up first and foremost in the streets of Paris; and it is not without reason that Sarkozy, when running for presidency in early 2007, challenged the "1968 mood" as if to pre-empt any future street upheaval that may claim to be (as in 2005) the movement successor to the 1968 Paris "revolution".

Over the long run, the macro significance of Paris as a centre of gravity for popular events has been confirmed, and akin to most developed and/or growing cities, it has known a significant rise in delinquency. What happens in Paris – whether good or bad - propels ripples in the "province", and the trends in juvenile delinquency that parallel those saw an increase in police forces in Paris, were replicating throughout France. The roots of the delinquency were originally identified as economic hence triggering policies targeting Banlieue renewal and economic stimulus designed to create local jobs and trigger an incentive for social integration by the affected population. These were pursued and implemented with great energy for a number of years. (Coleman)

It might also be useful to remind that Paris entertains a strong relationship with its Banlieues (in a circumference of less than a 35 kilometer vicinity, typical also of other large cities in France). Indeed, the 2005 Paris Banlieue riots did not represent an exceptional event in French political and social life because they formed part of a cyclical process of urban violence that started after the Arab-Israeli Yom Kippur/1973 War and coincided with the first oil (energy) crisis (1973-1974). Since then, a popular theme of young immigrants' alienation has been recurring. Interestingly, the then called "urban explosions" occurred in the suburbs of other French cities, Paris not attracting trouble until the death of Malek Oussekine (1986) who became an icon of police victims. But since this individual case, numerous other (collective movement-like) incidents followed suit, earning the Paris suburbs the (in)famous Banlieue label. By now, more than twenty years of revolutionary knowledge have accumulated in the Banlieues facilitating the proliferation of violence in urban areas, crystallising on the heals of daily "incidents" contained mainly – but not always - within tolerable bounds by the police and gendarmerie field forces.

Contrary to the notion that the Banlieue movement (the riots and their aftermath) was founded in rage and despair rather than guided by any clear political or religious background, we assert that very active "agents" were soon operating within the movement, able to exercise a real leadership role, seizing on its spontaneous inception, and controlling its development until its conclusion. For instance, some neighbourhoods reacted by setting up "local benevolent non-armed brigades" composed mostly of a handful of adults in their 30-50s, volunteering to patrol the cities by night, equipped with bats, cell phones, cameras and flash lights. Specifically, the religious establishment of the suburbs (mosques and mullahs) played a significant moderating

role bringing the urban violence to an end. Again, men in a similar age bracket yet acting as Muslim leaders, held meetings inside the Mosques and instructed, even commanded, worshippers as to proper conduct. Significantly, some of the Muslim fundamentalist leaders suggested to resurrect the regulations of the French Muslims of the "Millet" dating back to the Ottoman Empire, a "religious autonomy law" which is, of course, incongruous with the French Republican ethos. Therefore, we hypothesize that the young rioters must have felt some form of submission to religious leaders and that additional inquiries of the relationships between age groups and religious authorities/institutions within the Banlieue, and their mode of operation, are due. Evidently, the recent French governmental appointments (three cabinet positions to second and third generation migrant Banlieue residents) signify a direct response to such sentiments and to the riots.

Contrary to the view according to which France is not "an ethnically homogeneous nation", since most rioters originated from very diverse ethnic origins (from Maghreb to Congo, Mali or Turkey) and congregated in their distinct communities (Gaudu, 2006), we maintain that sharing the same language (French), same public schools, and similar claims to the French social system, represent bridging factors facilitating collaboration over a uniform platform and under one banner of revolt, even creating a new identity (e.g. French Black). This rudimentary basis of solidarity, of a suburb proletariat that has nothing to lose in a confrontation with state authorities, is fertile ground to be capitalised by interested agents. This proletariat, which no longer "believes" in schools, education and work as a road to upward mobility in one's life, especially the "sans-papiers" among this proletariat (about 10% of the rioters) might turn out playing a historical role similar to the Sans-culottes who were mobilised to trigger the French revolution in 1789-1793. Of a post-modern era, rather then spending time in gatherings and revolutionary brochure writing, the Banlieue rioters congregated "virtually" using Net-communication to elude police yet secure ongoing agitation. Among the agents figured also music-hall and sports stars, who were encouraging the Banlieue youth to assert their political rights through massive registration on electoral registers suggesting a potential voting power at the upcoming 2008 local elections. (Dixmier 2005)

Brief, while the common interpretation of the riots - that is was the function of police induced stress - is, of course, valid, and the hatred towards the "forces of order" is real indeed, this explanation fails to capture the entire picture. A careful examination of the initial triggering

incident in Clichy-sous-bois suggests that the revolt it triggered was very likely the result of a convergence between an experience visceral to the young immigrants (micro) coupled with the external contextual stress on "quartiers difficiles" soon thereafter, capitalised on by "agents" (macro). Therefore, the potential for the development of a (revolutionary) social movement must not be discarded off hand.

Conclusion: Urban Violence in Jerusalem and Paris

Curiously, Benvenisti says: "On the seventh day of the Six-Day War, the Israeli Second Republic was established". (1992: 60) Reminiscent of the differences marking the various French republics, the "Israeli Second Republic" is bi-national, rigidly stratified in a dualism along ethnic lines. Paradoxically, the rising standard of living of Palestinians under Israeli occupation revitalised their society socially, culturally, and politically, but also sharpened their frustration. (Benvenisti 1992) The Intifada represents the climax of this development. Almost twenty years later, across the Mediterranean, the largest French right wing newspaper, Le Figaro, entitled its 31st October 2005 edition "Intifada des Banlieues", and the prospect of a revival of the young rioters by a Muslim militant movement was surmised. (Roy 2005)

We suggest prudence. Although both phenomena involved acts of urban violence - throwing stones, burning cars - crucial differences are distinguishing the Intifada from the Banlieue riots, and if only - by the number of people killed or wounded. While the human death toll was contained to a minimum in the Banlieue riots, it has been a major subject of concern for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Nevertheless, both the Banlieue night rioters and the Intifada rebels exhibited ritual solidarity (micro level) and were attracted to processes of collective structuring of a movement by "agent" leaders (macro level). Rather than addressing the entire picture, different observers were focusing their attention on either micro or macro levels, consequently offering divergent interpretations. In each case however, the protest was clearly both generational - challenging the leadership of a physiologically and politically older and established leadership, and social and political - defying the dominant main stream order. Also, in spite of their different civil status, the Banlieue youngsters who were mostly French citizens shared with the Palestinian Jerusalemites a similar sense of humiliation and despair.

Yet, the Intifada and the Banlieue riots differ in many respects. For instance, in the Intifada, the leadership was initially *challenged by the protesters* to take a stand, and only consequently adjusted itself to the new circumstances; in the Banlieue - the *leadership seized on an opportunity*, remaining relatively independent of the rioters, which it harnessed for its goals. While in Jerusalem, a belt of Jewish neighbourhoods was encroaching on the Palestinian neighbourhoods, a belt of immigrant Banlieues is encircling Paris. The Intifada in Jerusalem involved a state of belligerent occupation, whereas in Paris - although representing a socio-cultural "foreign enclave", the Banlieue were undoubtedly French. All these factors are crucial in explaining the psychology of the communities at point.

In the Intifada, the convergence of micro "ritual solidarity" across the Palestinian society in the Occupied Territories, including the "elitist" Jerusalem, had proven to create a political momentum, giving rise to what has come to be known as "a third front" in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination. In the process, a relatively new revolutionary social movement (the Hamas) has been reinforced. In France, over time, one might expect those interacting micro-macro factors to converge into a difficult to ignore political momentum. It may prompt the institutionalisation of both new political strategy and leadership, possibly - with international links. We suggest that what appears to have started in Paris represents a social movement promoting a model for France different from the secular, lay, and egalitarian classic Republican one. The Intifada returned with a vengeance. It remains to be seen how a possibly homogeneous "meritocracie à la Française" might emerge from this process in ten years time, or whether more trouble of "impossible integration" are lying ahead.

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Endnotes

[1] The evolution of a mob into a social movement can be likened to a sequence of circular rippling effects.

[2] A vital distinction between the French and Israeli-Palestinian cases is doubtlessly the fact that Banlieue rioters were French citizens whereas in Jerusalem, Palestinian rioters were reluctant (if at all) residents of Jerusalem and an integral part of a people living under occupation.

[3] The religious stream of the Intifada, similar to the socialist and nationalist streams, jumped on the bandwagon of the spontaneous outbreak of the uprising. In a twenty year retrospective - at the backdrop of the power struggle within the Palestinian Authority, the rise of the Hiz' al Tharir in the West Bank and the "conquest" of the Gaza Strip as well as the bolstering of the Islamist forces throughout Lebanon and the Middle East - the religious stream appears to have been firmly solidifying its grip over the formerly moderate religious and partly secular Palestinian society.

[4] Listed as acts of urban violence in the French statistics of the 2005, riots consist of: « Incendies de véhicules, de poubelles et de bien public, jets de projectiles, dégradations de mobilier urbain, rodéos automobiles, violences collectives, occupations des halls d'immeubles, affrontements entre bandes ». Source and charts of total incidents of urban violence and definition of incidents of urban violence by police statistics available at :http://images.google.fr/imgres?imgurl=http://medias.lemonde.fr/mmpub/edt/ill/2006/10/23/v_8_ill_706282_clic hy%2Bx4i1-_converti_.gif&imgrefurl=http://www.lemonde.fr/web/infog/0,47-0%402-3224,54-706283,0.html&start=1&h=475&w=373&sz=28&tbnid=O840m8sdDWnKIM:&tbnh=129&tbnw=101&hl=fr&u m=1&prev=/images%3Fq%3D4%2Bsur%2B10%2Bsont%2Bdes%2Bincendies%2Bde%2Bvoitures%26gbv%3 D1%26svnum%3D10%26um%3D1%26hl%3Dfr%26sa%3DN.

[5] The flyers were indispensable to the transforming of the early Intifada into a sustainable, and even recurring expression of a, revolutionary social movement. It took 10 days for the PLO to publish its first flyer in Gaza, and two weeks - in Nablus; even when celebrating its 20th anniversary - on the third day of the Intifada - the organisation remained mute about the riots. Only the religious movements were early on the spot. (Schiff and Ya'ari)

[6] However, it failed to fundamentally change the relationship with the other Arab states. (Gilbar and Susser 1992: 15, 16)

[7] Consisting of resisting the Israeli occupation but concurrently willing to maintain contacts and cooperation with Israel in daily matters. (Mishal and Aharoni 1989: 21)

[8] While the state of emergency seems to had calmed down the urban violence, ironically, three months later, on March 2006, students started demonstrating in the streets precisely against this law. Thus, the unrest of young people in France did not really subside from the 27th October 2005 till the end of June 2006.

[9] All translations are by the authors.