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“Typologizing Discriminatory Practices :

Law Enforcement and Minorities in New York, Lyon and Milan”

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<CT>Typologizing Discriminatory Practices</CT>

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<AN>François Bonnet</AN>

Barack Obama's election as president of the United States has generated a lively debate on the integration of minorities in Western countries. France is struggling with its "universalistic republican" model, which suppresses minority claims in the name of national unity. The bipartisan support for the veil ban illustrates the French reluctance to embrace diversity. Italian prime minister Silvio Berlusconi's dubious joke on Obama's "tan" has highlighted the prevalence of overt racism in contemporary Italy. Meanwhile, violence against immigrants and police brutality have become widespread in this new immigration country. Yet Obama's election has not resolved the American racial fracture: African Americans make up to 41 percent of the prison population in the United States, while representing 13 percent of the overall population.

The study of law enforcement is relevant to analyze the integration of minorities, because the relationships between law enforcement agencies and minorities are often based on conflict. For instance, quantitative studies by Rick Ruddell of 100 countries and David Jacobs and Richard Kleban of 13 countries show that minorities suffer higher incarceration rates than mainstream groups.<sup>1</sup> In consideration of many variables, the presence of minorities in any given environment is the strongest predictor for high incarceration rates, far above unemployment. There is great controversy in both academic and public realms about why such a high percentage of minorities face imprisonment. Regarding immigrants, research shows that they tend to commit less crime than native citizens. Moreover, second-generation immigrants commit more crime than their parents and nonminority natives.<sup>2</sup> Roughly, one

can map the competing theories of discrimination by making conceptual distinctions. One distinction opposes realists to constructivists. Realists think that minorities commit more crime than other demographics, while constructivists think that minorities endure biased law enforcement policies. A second distinction stems from the issue of the intentionality of discrimination, which examines whether there is an active prejudice from the mainstream.

<sup>3</sup>	Constructivist	Realist
Unconscious prejudice	Cognitive (Zerubavel, 1999 ; DiMaggio, 1997 ; Douglas, 1986) / Group threat (Blumer, 1958 ; Quillian, 1995)	Statistical discrimination (Phelps, 1972)
Active prejudice	Labeling theories (Becker, 1963 ; Goffman, 1963) / Conflict theories (Palidda 1996, Wacquant 1999)	“Pure” racial prejudice (as analyzed by Adorno et al. 1983)

In this chapter, I do not intend to prove or disprove the competing theories of discrimination. My goal is to understand the logics of discriminatory practices from the point of view of law enforcement agencies according to the structural context in which these relationships occur. This approach may be relevant because, in my view, the study of discrimination is always at risk of fostering moral accusation rather than sociological understanding.<sup>4</sup>

I begin by introducing my data: five case studies in Lyon (France), Milan (Italy), and New York City (United States) in which the relationships between law enforcement agencies and minorities have been assessed by qualitative methods. Next, I outline the relevant variables suggested by my fieldwork to account for the differences in policing methods within each setting. I find the two most pertinent variables to be the economic usefulness of the minority along with their political empowerment. Defining these variables allows me to build a typology of discriminatory practices. Ultimately, this chapter suggests that an improved state of economic usefulness for minorities is the critical factor in ameliorating relations between police and minority populations; political empowerment

alone only mitigates the public discourse toward these minorities, rather than the discriminatory practices. The policing of Africans Americans in inner cities makes a case for this rationale.

### <1>Five Case Studies in France, Italy, and the United States</1>

This work relies on five case studies conducted in France, Italy, and the United States. I have done interviews and observations in two railway stations and two shopping centers, one of each in France and in Italy, and an African American neighborhood in Brooklyn (New York) named East New York. Mass private property such as railway stations and shopping centers are ideal laboratories to study law enforcement and discrimination, because they gather large and diverse crowds among which screening and profiling in law enforcement is particularly obvious. A socially and racially segregated community, East New York is a relevant site to study the interactions between law enforcement and minorities. In each of the French and Italian sites, I conducted twenty to twenty-five interviews directly centered on the issue of security, crime control, and discrimination, for a total of more than ninety interviews and countless hours of observation. In East New York, I conducted more than seventy interviews and attended more than twenty public meetings, mostly about social services and law enforcement.

Qualitative data is helpful to understand the subtle dynamics of interaction between concrete, local law enforcement agencies and concrete, local populations. As I show, the national context out of which most quantitative data are drawn is a too broad unit of analysis to understand the logics of what is going on in the field. In the case of discriminatory practices, it is also useful to get a sense of the subjective meaning that actors are giving to their action. I do not intend to propose to the reader a “comparative study.” My point is not to highlight differences and similarities between countries, but to understand which relevant

variables shape the logics of different discriminatory practices. As my data suggest, local contextual differences between two cases in a same country may be more interesting than cross-national differences—hence the need for fine-tuned empirical studies.

## <2>The French Railway Station</2>

The Part-Dieu railway station is located in the center of Lyon, France's second biggest urban agglomeration. About 80,000 passengers use it every day. The sheer volume of people passing by creates a security problem: travelers may fall on the tracks, and a mass panic can be devastating. Furthermore, both the state and the railway company have always been extremely cautious about crime and social order in railway stations. Since the mid-nineteenth century, the state has controlled these nodes where hundreds of thousands people converge. The concerns over uncontrolled crowds, agitators, and trafficking have motivated the state to install a police station in most big railway stations, including Part-Dieu. The railway companies also have their own private police who are responsible for preventing vandalism, shoplifting, pickpocketing, and unruly behavior, as well as monitoring employees who might engage in sabotage. The main mission of the police and of the security guards is to patrol the station to deter crime and disorder.

Police officers and security guards describe their job as dealing with problems stemming from the presence of Arab youths in the station. They are second and third generation immigrants from Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia who mostly live in housing projects of the poor suburbs. Because French law forbids the collection of statistics indicating ethnicity, and because it would be socially unacceptable to exhibit racist tendencies, these agents express the fact that they mainly deal with Arab youth under the premise of the “sad truth.”

<EXT>Anyway, I'm gonna be honest with you, 90 percent of our population, it's rather Arab, maybe more. (Security guard, [French Railway Company])</EXT>

<EXT>You want me to be honest with you? You want me to be honest with you? Frankly? Objectively speaking? Ninety percent of my clients are North Africans or Africans. It may not please everybody but it is the sad truth. The 10 percent remaining. . . . Things have to be told as they are, I'm not looking for my clients, they come to me. (Security guard, [French Railway Company])</EXT>

There is a now enduring history of conflicting relationships between young men with ethnic backgrounds in France and law enforcement agencies. Almost all riots in the banlieues (the French poor minority neighborhoods) have started from an event of police misbehavior toward minorities.<sup>5</sup> As a consequence of this context, security guards use a martial rhetoric to describe how they try to “reconquer” lost territory over minority youths. The notion of “turf” is very relevant for both the law enforcement agencies and youths.<sup>6</sup> Law enforcement agencies act as if it were more important to fight over turf than protecting the public from deviant behavior. Policing becomes a dual relationship in which only the target group matters.

<EXT>It was not a gang, but a group, with a core, they thought they owned the station, we made them understand that the station is ours. . . . Our job is to spot these guys and have them understand that, if we do that only once it is useless, but if we do that every day it is a strong deterrent. (Police officer)</EXT>

<EXT>The station is big, but I think this is space that we are losing and at some point we will have to get it back, if I may speak so. . . . They have to understand that the train is not theirs, it's ours; well, so to speak, let's speak in terms of territory, I am a

[French Railway Company] employee, it's my home, it's my territory (Security guard, [French Railway Company])</EXT>

In this "us versus them" way of thinking, specific occurrences of crime against people matter less than a potential loss of control over a territory. The fear of the law enforcement agents is to be trapped in a situation of urban warfare in which gangs of Arab youths would use weapons against them. The agents harbor negative feelings over judiciary institutions, which they accuse of leniency toward what they consider dangerous groups. Each arrest is seen as the occasion for a moment of unity and pride, and occasional uses of force against minority youths are celebrated as virile fighting back.

## <2>The French Shopping Center</2>

There are more than 250 shops in the shopping center of Lyon that attract 30,000 people on any given day. Three kinds of law enforcement personnel are located inside the shopping center: police officers, the shopping center's security guards, and each specific shop's security guards. These three forces do different things in the shopping center. Police officers sometimes patrol the mall to deter criminal behavior, but most of the times they wait for complaints from shopkeepers and customers. The security guards in the shops monitor both customers and employees and have to prevent shoplifting and minor disorders. The security guards hired by the shopping center's management monitor the common space of the mall, the alleys alongside which shops are installed. In 1998, a riot occurred in the shopping center, involving hundreds of Arab youths, during the Aid-al-Fitr (day of the end of Ramadan). Little is known about this riot, but the reputation of the shopping center was damaged. City residents thought the shopping center was unsafe. In 2000, the management of the shopping center and the new people in charge decided to enforce a new strategy to

deal with minority youths. I will develop this later. The point here is that in the French shopping center, the main “problem” of shopkeepers is that of Arab youths.

For instance, on the door of a snooker business, a little poster said: “Sneakers and sportswear forbidden.” In the French context, this undoubtedly means that Arab youths coming from social housing are not welcome. This poster disappeared very soon, probably because the management of the shopping center was unhappy with it and its racist connotations. Many security guards working closely with shopkeepers are also unhappy with minority youths.

<EXT>Youths gangs. My primary mission is to discourage these youths that come as gangs. When they come, we know them. Fighting them is a priority. . . . This is a private space open to the public. We want to stay in control (Security manager, large shop)</EXT>

What is true in the railway station is true as well in the shopping center. Police officers and security guards have developed an “us versus them” mentality toward minority youths, but they rarely express their views explicitly. Everything is said to the researcher with coded words.

<EXT>[This shopping center] drags a lot of people, there are sports superstores, therefore there are thefts, youths get tempted. We have organized thefts, gangs coming in, many youths drinking in groups. When these lovely young children [he smiles ironically] are drunk, they act stupid (Police officer)</EXT>

What makes the shopping center interesting when compared to the French railway station is the third security actor in the shopping center: the security guards working for the center’s management. Most of them are in their twenties and have North African origins. They are hired by the shopping center to ease things with the groups of youths that are seen as troublemakers by the shopkeepers.



<EXT>When it becomes troubled, we don't hesitate, we call the security [of the shopping center]. And because it is always the same who make problems, they [the security guards] know them all, they know how to speak with them, to calm them. (Shopkeeper)</EXT>

<EXT>And [shopping center's guards] they know the youths; they speak their language, it's better that problems get solved by them than by someone else. (Security manager, shopping center)</EXT>

Not only have the security guards been hired specifically to solve pacifically the problems created by turbulent youths, but also the shopping center's management has recruited a mediator whose job is to talk to youths to prevent conflicts. This is a wholly different situation from the railway station case.

## <2>The Italian Shopping Center</2>

The Italian shopping center is located in Rozzano in the outskirts of Milan. Rozzano is a poor city of 37,000 inhabitants whose population was multiplied by ten in the last fifty years. Most newcomers were economic migrants from southern Italy. In the 1980s, unemployment rose and heroin addiction became widespread. Nowadays, Rozzano's cheap housing prices and housing projects tend to attract immigrants from North Africa and Eastern Europe. The police of Rozzano have historically been understaffed: four carabinieri for more than 30,000 inhabitants until 2002. Therefore, the security team of the shopping center cannot rely on the police to deal with the two important issues that the shopping center faces: turbulent youths and Roma.

Turbulent youths are mostly of southern Italian origin. They are the children of the poor inhabitants of the housing projects of Rozzano. They share a cultural proximity with the

security guards, who also originated from southern Italy.<sup>7</sup> Security guards who have worked in the shopping center for a long time have seen these teenagers growing up and informally know their parents. Security guards very rarely use force against these youths. They most likely try to find peaceful solutions and compromises through personal contacts and paternalistic management.

On the contrary, Roma are perceived as a pure threat and dealt with as such. They are not allowed to enter the shopping center (in itself a violation of the law). Access is simply denied. They are not allowed to set a foot on the parking slot either.

<EXT>We keep them [Roma] under pressure, we don't quit, until they go away, we are on their backs. With the CCTV we check things out, as soon as we see Roma on the parking lot we intervene, we can't allow them to settle a precedent, then they would all come, and you lose control of the situation. (Security manager)</EXT>

In an off-the-record conversation, the security manager told me that during the summer holidays, Roma came while security guards were off and replaced by inexperienced colleagues. He proudly mentioned the use of violence to force the Roma to leave after the end of the holidays.

## <2>The Italian Railway Station</2>

Every day about 300,000 people walk through Milano Centrale, which makes this station one of the most crowded in Europe. It also has an awful reputation among the Milanese. For years, it has been known as a hot spot for drugs, prostitution, homelessness, and muggings. It symbolizes the degrade urbano (urban decay). Many foreigners (Rumanians, Ukrainians, North Africans, Senegalese, Albanians, and so forth) spend time in and around the station, gathering in loose crowds, sometimes drinking, sometimes sleeping, to the furor of the

conservative “citizens committees” of the neighborhood. Unsurprisingly, foreigners are the primary target of Italian police forces in the station.

<EXT>Foreigners make 90 percent of the arrests. They share tasks: North Africans deal drugs, Algerians and French, but who are ex-Algerians, they steal. Chileans, South Americans, they steal too, but they are smarter. Romanians do a little bit of everything, they deal drugs, they steal. With Romanians, it’s an invasion, since the economic agreements, they don’t need visas any more, half of crime, it’s Romanians [he shows me the records]. (Police officer)</EXT>

<EXT>[I ask him to repeat.] One hundred percent of the arrests, foreigners make 100 percent of the arrests. There are no Italians any more. We have Slavs, Albanians, Africans. Some live out of crime and some others are sitting outside and starve. That’s the criminal population. Ten or twenty years ago, there were 70 percent Italians and 30 percent foreigners, but now we only have foreigners. (Police officer)</EXT>

A striking fact of the way police officers talk about crime and foreigners is the immediate association of a nationality with a crime. In contemporary Italian language, speaking of “the Nigerian woman” (*la Nigeriana*) means unequivocally “a street prostitute,” just as “the Filipino woman” (*la Filipina*) means “the cleaning woman.” Unlike the French cases, in which security actors were somehow sorry for telling “sad truths” and were reluctant to be perceived as racist, Italian police officers feel free and comfortable to make statements that may appear controversial in other countries.

<EXT>Thefts are on the rise, because of Albanians and Romanians who have just arrived. I mean they don’t deal drugs, they mostly steal. They also do some muggings. Thefts unrelated to drug addiction, that’s mostly Slavs. (Police officer)</EXT>

<EXT>[And the drug dealers?] All foreigners. Those about heroin, all foreigners. Those about cocaine, half Italian and half foreigners. Cannabis, Moroccans and Tunisians. . . . Heroin comes from Turkey. During the last war in Albania, in Kosovo, Albania became free, and they seeded cannabis, cocaine, and heroine. The largest share comes from there, through Bari. (Police officer)</EXT>

One may think that these foreigners are policed in harsh ways. This is true for most known criminals, understood as individuals caught in the act of committing a crime like theft or mugging. But most foreigners around Centrale are subject to harsh policing tactics. In fact, there are many social services available to them, from food pantries to services for drug addicts. I cannot stress enough that once they are caught by the police, foreigners have few rights and may be victimized, but overall, the availability of social services makes the place an attractive one for foreigners.

## <2>East New York (Brooklyn)</2>

East New York is a neighborhood of Brooklyn. It has historically been a slum inhabited by immigrants from Ireland and Italy and Jews from eastern Europe. After 1945, the neighborhood was one of the places in New York where blacks were allowed to settle after migrating from the rural South. In a few years, the neighborhood, which was 80 percent white, became 95 percent black and Puerto Rican. Huge housing projects were built to provide a home for African American families, which in turn sped up the formation of a homogenous ghetto. During the 1970s, the city of New York was close to bankruptcy; it failed to maintain buildings and to provide basic services such as garbage disposal or replacing street signs. The epidemics of crack cocaine addiction and rising unemployment rates heavily struck the neighborhood.

In East New York, the police have implemented a dual policing. On the one hand, they rely heavily on CompStat, a sophisticated computerized mapping system that helps officers track patterns of criminal behavior. CompStat helps maximize arrests and is one of the factors that explain the sharp drop in crime in New York City at the end of the 1990s. But the aggressive policing style of CompStat involves a lot of humiliating stop-and-frisks and contributes greatly to mass incarceration. On the other hand, and because the New York Police Department (NYPD) has a terrible reputation of dealing with African Americans, NYPD officials have decided to adopt community policing strategies. Each precinct has “community affairs” representatives, and the captain is supposed to hold a monthly public meeting where he or she explains crime statistics and answers questions from the audience.

Because the East New York case is about controlling an entire neighborhood rather than a more circumscribed mass private property like a railway station or a shopping center, I focus in the next sections on the more comparable Italian and French case, and will come back to the American case in the discussion.

### <1>Variables</1>

The five cases presented above show a variety of policing styles and attitudes toward minorities. In this section, I review the two variables that account for most of the differences. These two variables are the economic usefulness of the minority and the state of its political empowerment.

### <2>Economic Usefulness</2>

The concept of economic usefulness of a population has three components. The first idea is that a population is economically useful when it is needed in the labor market; a population is not useful when it exhibits high unemployment rates. The relationship between labor

markets and incarceration is under close scrutiny.<sup>8</sup> When young males are unemployed, they frequently exhibit higher incarceration rates. The second idea is that a population is useful when it performs specific economic operations that the rest of the population cannot or is unable to perform; Jewish bankers in medieval Europe are an example of such a population. The third idea is that a population is useful when it has a purchasing power that is critical for other economic actors. The hypothesis here is that the more economically useful the minorities, the more likely law enforcement agencies will use integrative policing tactics.

Evidences from fieldwork support this hypothesis. In both shopping centers, the purchasing power of Arab or Italian youths, as well as the purchasing power of their parents, makes them valuable customers. As a consequence, these populations cannot be mistreated without retaliating—by shopping elsewhere.

<EXT>The aim is not to do repression but to do develop instead a respect regarding the relational and the diplomatic. . . Families, the people here, they came back because of the new attractiveness of the shopping center, and because of the policy of the center to lower the number of youths who were making troubles. They are still young, but they are also customers. (Fast food manager)</EXT>

This economic usefulness insulates them from the harsh policing tactics that are applied on Roma in the Italian shopping center, and, to a lesser degree, to homeless in the French shopping center (who are simply not allowed to enter in). Roma are economically useless because they just settle on the parking lot and are thought to engage in shoplifting.

In the French railway station, Arab youths are not directly useful to the management through their purchasing power. Therefore, the general scheme of policing outlined by Steven Spitzer applies to them<sup>9</sup>: crime control is about policing the “social dynamite”—young unemployed men who are a potential threat to social order, as opposed to the “social junk” (women and people with disabilities). In France, the unemployment rate is 10 percent,

and the unemployment rate for Arab youths is above 25 percent. Arab youths are generally considered, in the French province, as dangerous. Arab youths in the French railway station exhibit high rates of unemployment, therefore demonstrating a lower value in the labor market. As a result, law enforcement agencies use aggressive policing against them.

On the contrary, in Italy immigrants in the prosperous northern regions have a lower unemployment (5.2 percent) rate than nationals (9 percent).<sup>10</sup> Off-the-book labor for immigrants is immensely widespread in Italy. Men tend to work in the construction business, while women engage in domestic work such as elderly care and household cleaning—both industries are well known for off-the-book opportunities. There is a saying, “In Milan it’s easier to get a job than to get an apartment.” Lax labor laws for small business in Lombardy make it easy for local entrepreneurs to hire a cheap workforce. Immigrants in Italy are an example of a useful minority because of their value on the labor market. The Italian railway station is used by petty entrepreneurs in Lombardy as a collecting point for immigrants. Immigrants are picked up in the morning and transported in trucks to work during the day on construction sites. As a result, there are political pressures on the different actors in the station to favor integrative policing tactics rather than mere repression. Many city-funded social services are available to immigrants to alleviate the troubles they may cause to residents.

## <2>Political Empowerment</2>

The other relevant variable is political empowerment. Most immigrant groups are helpless when they first arrive in a country. They are subject to racism, discrimination, and exploitation, and they lack the resources—economic, organizational, and linguistic—to fight back. Because of that, many mainstream groups take advantage of that situation to exploit their vulnerabilities. Arab immigrants in the 1960s were routinely housed in slums and

underpaid as compared as their French-born coworkers. Through social activism, legal action, violence, politics, demonstrations, and so forth, minorities organize and are ultimately able to achieve political empowerment. They claim rights and expose the discrimination and unfair practices they are subjected to. As a result of this process, overt discrimination becomes less and less tolerated by the institutions of the mainstream. The racist statements that were accepted (in the media, in politicians' talks) at a certain time are not accepted any more, because the minority has been able to establish a power relationship and to defend itself.

The main difference between the four cases is the difference between the French and Italian cases. In Italy, the immigration of foreigners began in the early 1990s, and there is not yet a second generation. There are 2.5 million legal immigrants in Italy, 32.3 percent being from eastern Europe, 26.5 percent from Africa (mostly Moroccans and Senegalese), 18.5 percent from Asia (mostly Chinese and Filipinos) and 11.8 percent from South America.<sup>11</sup> The five main groups are Romanians (240,000), Moroccans (227,000), Albanians (224,000), Ukrainians (121,000), and Chinese (97,000). Ukrainians are the most recent immigrants; with the Bossi-Fini law that regularized 700,000 illegal immigrants in 2002, their official number grew 760 percent. More than half of the migrants come for economic reasons. Recent immigrants in Italy have not had time yet to organize and achieve some political empowerment. It is perfectly fine in Italy to use negative stereotypes when it comes to immigrants. Police officers, railway company officials, and security guards can freely express their prejudice without disclaimer. For instance, it is perfectly fine for the shopping center director to say "Yes, we have foreigners, but they are quiet," as if foreigners were expected to be troublemakers. In the tables reporting the activity of a nongovernmental organization (NGO) helping drug addicts, one can find a list of problems treated such as "drug addicts, socially disabled, mentally ill, alcoholics, foreigners"; in a poll conducted by a



trade union on crime in the station, a question lists potential problems: “foreigners, alcoholics, Roma, drug addicts, homeless, criminals.” Both this NGO and trade union are left-wing, progressive organizations. It is just normal to associate foreigners with crime and disorder.

On the contrary, overt racism in France is strongly discouraged. While racist statements remain in private conversations, they are rarely expressed in public. It is very unlikely that police officers and security guards will express explicitly racist views with an outsider such as an academic who is interviewing them. Any indication that Arab youths may be the central concern of security agencies is preceded by disclaimers such as “I am not a racist but. . . .” Arab youths are never named as such; the closest label would be “youths,” which sounds too direct (and therefore too racist) to designate Arab youths. Nonetheless, while discrimination is explicitly forbidden, discriminatory practices are widespread, and constant rhetorical cover-up is invented. My evidence suggests that as a minority gets more powerful, discrimination becomes more covert, but discriminatory practices remain unaffected.

#### <1>A Typology of Discriminatory Practices</1>

Table 10.2 summarizes the typology of discriminatory practices in policing minorities according to the two variables I find relevant. By extrapolating beyond available data, one can imagine that the fate of a useful and a powerful minority is assimilation in the mainstream, such as Italians or Poles in France, or Jews in the United States. The trend for a useful but powerless minority is to be seen by the mainstream as a mere workforce and not a full component of society; South Asians in the United States exemplify this position.<sup>12</sup> A useless and powerless minority faces considerable challenges. Here the legal environment is critical. This chapter is based on fieldwork in liberal democracies where basic human rights

are preserved. Useless and powerless minorities are therefore protected by this legal environment from pogroms and state violence.

		Political empowerment +				
		Covert discrimination and aggressive law enforcement		Covert discrimination and integrative policing		
		Arab youths in the French railway station		Arab youths in the French shopping center		
		Trend: Conflict		Trend: Assimilation		
Economic usefulness -						Economic usefulness +
		Overt discrimination and aggressive law enforcement		Overt discrimination and integrative policing		
		Gypsies in the Italian shopping center		Ukrainians in the Italian railway station		
		Trend: Extermination		Trend: Exploitation		
		Political empowerment -				

Powerful and useless minorities are trapped in a situation in which, on the one hand, overt discrimination is forbidden and socially sanctioned, and, on the other hand, harsh policing tactics are disproportionately used against them. The case of African Americans living in segregated inner cities may be relevant here. Through activism and political struggle, African Americans have overcome considerable obstacles in the past fifty years. Formal segregation and legal apartheid has been ended; in 2006, 38 U.S. representatives (out of 435) were African American, which is less than their demographic weight (8 versus 13 percent) but yet significant; several big cities have elected an African American mayor; Barack Obama is president of the United States; and overt racism is extremely politically incorrect in the United States (though covert racism remains widespread). Yet African Americans make up to 41 percent of the prison population (while their demographic weight

is 13 percent). As of 2004, 12.6 percent of black men in their late twenties were incarcerated, while 3.6 percent of the Hispanics and 1.7 percent of the whites were.

Ethnographic evidence from East New York support this claim. In this Brooklyn neighborhood, all political officials are African American. But the unemployment rate in the housing projects is very high—31 percent. Much higher is the percentage of those not even in the labor force: 69.1 percent (the New York City average is 42.2 percent). This means that most African Americans living in the housing projects are not integrated in the labor market and live off the informal economy and welfare subsidies. African Americans in East New York are not economically useful, and political empowerment does not protect from all-repressive policing. The NYPD is primarily concerned with maximizing the number of arrests through computer-assisted mapping of crime. Community policing remains a marginal activity, mainly invested by the black middle-class and Latino homeowners.

#### <1>Policy Implications</1>

In this chapter, I attempt to provide a typology of the different manners in which law enforcement agencies deal with minorities. The power/usefulness grid allows for the identification of four paths of mainstream/minority relationships. From a sociological standpoint, this typology is useful to observe how different variables produce different patterns of interaction. The notion of discrimination may be too large and too encompassing to describe the varieties of behaviors that actually occur. From the standpoint of policy making and social activism, the model suggests that the improvement of relationships between the mainstream and the minority should not draw solely from institution building and political empowerment. As seen in the French shopping mall and the Italian railway stations, it is better to rely on the self-interest of people rather than on their goodwill.

“Economically useful” immigrants—however morally repugnant the notion is—

receive better treatment from law enforcement agencies than those who are merely “politically powerful.” The taboo on overt displays of racism does not prevent many French police officers from hating Arab youths and harassing them whenever they can; nor does it prevent the U.S. law enforcement system from locking up a disproportionate number of African American men. Political empowerment is a necessary condition of successful integration, but is not a sufficient one. Economic usefulness, on the contrary, always improves the status of the minority in the eyes of the law enforcement agencies.

Economically useful immigrants are subjected to a more humane type of policing, like the mediation and negotiation in the French shopping center or the social services in the Italian railway station. This chapter therefore suggests that policies designed to improve minorities’ lives should aim at enhancing their economic opportunities and above all at integrating them in the labor market.

<N1>Notes</N1>

1. Rick Ruddell, “Social Disruption, State Priorities, and Minority Threat: A Cross-National Study of Imprisonment,” Punishment and Society 7, no. 1 (2005): 7–28; David Jacobs and Richard Kleban, “Political Institutions, Minorities, and Punishment: A Pooled Cross-National Analysis of Imprisonment Rates,” Social Forces 80, no. 2 (December 2003): 725–755.
2. Daniel P. Sears, “The Immigration-Crime Nexus: Toward an Analytic Framework for Assessing and Guiding Theory, Research, and Policy,” Sociological Perspectives 44, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 1–19.
3. Herbert Blumer, “Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position”, Pacific Sociological Review, vol. 1, (1958): 3-7; Paul DiMaggio, “Culture and Cognition”, Annual Review of Sociology, vol. 23, (1997); Edmond Phelps, “The Statistical Theory of Racism and Sexism”, American Economic Review, 62, no. 4, (1972):659-661; Theodore Adorno et al., The

Authoritarian Personality (New York: Norton, 1983); Howard S. Becker, Outsiders (Glencoe : The Free Press, 1963); Mary Douglas, How Institutions Think (Syracuse : Syracuse University Press, 1986); Erving Goffman, Stigma (Prentice Hall, 1963); Eviatar Zerubavel, Social Mindscapes. An Invitation to Cognitive Sociology (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Loïc Wacquant, Les prisons de la misère (Paris: Liber, Raisons d’agir, 1999); Salvatore Palidda, “La construction sociale de la déviance et de la criminalité parmi les immigrés : le cas italien”, pp. 231-266 in Salvatore Palidda (ed.), Immigration Delinquency. Social Construction of Deviant Behaviour and Criminality of Immigrants in Europe, (Brussels: European Commission, 1996)

4. Albert Bastenier, Qu’est-ce qu’une société ethnique? Ethnicité et racisme dans les sociétés européennes d’immigration (Paris: PUF, Sociologie d’aujourd’hui, 2004).

5. See Christian Bachmann and Nicole Le Guennec, Autopsie d’une émeute: Histoire exemplaire du soulèvement d’un quartier (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997); Fabien Jobard, Bavures policières? La force publique et ses usages (Paris: La Découverte, Politique et sociétés, 2002).

6. See Michel Kokoreff, “La dimension spatiale des modes de vie des jeunes,” Sociétés contemporaines no. 17 (1994): 29–49; David Lepoutre, Cœurs de banlieue: Codes, Rites, Languages (Paris: Odile Jacob, 1997), 35–78.

7. In Italy, northern regions are rich and prosperous, while southern regions exhibit high unemployment, poverty, and welfare rates. The Mezzogiorno (South) is associated with organized crime and laziness.

8. See George Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer, Punishment and Social Structure (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939); Theodore G. Chiricos and Miriam A. Delone, “Labor Surplus and Punishment: A Review and Assessment of Theory and Evidence,” Social Problems, 39, no. 4 (November 1992): 421–446; Bruce Western and Katherine Beckett,

“How Unregulated Is the U.S. Labor Market? The Penal System as a Labor Market Institution,” American Journal of Sociology 104, no. 4 (January 1999): 1030–1060.

9. Steven Spitzer, “Toward a Marxian Theory of Deviance,” Social Problems 22, no. 5 (June 1975): 638–651.

10. See Franco Pittau and Oliviero Forti, “Italia, paese di immigrazione: Tra flussi regolari e irregolari,” Studi Emigrazione/Migration Studies 41, no. 153 (2004): 157–168.

11. See *ibid.*

12. Vijay Prashad, The Karma of Brown Folks (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000).