

RESTLESS YOUTH

CAN FRANCE BRING ORDER TO THE STREETS AND HOPE TO THE RESTIVE MINORITIES OF THE BANLIEUES?
BY JAMES GEARY AND JAMES GRAFF/PARIS

THE MEDIATOR:
Traore goes looking
for trouble in Clichy-
sous-Bois—but when
he finds it, he tries to
calm things down

Photograph for TIME by
Alexandra Boulat—VII

TIME

It's a damp, cold November night in the run-down

Paris suburb of Clichy-sous-Bois. The rioting that has consumed France for over two weeks began here, but tonight things are relatively calm. No cars are burning; no fire fighters are hosing down flaming Dumpsters; no gangs of hooded youths prowling the streets. Police vans cruise slowly along the narrow roads, but all they encounter is two young men in a heated argument outside one of the dilapidated high-rise apartment blocks. "They're talking about deporting immigrants!" shouts Paul, who moved to Clichy-sous-Bois from Congo when he was 2. "We aren't immigrants! We're French!" The other man bellows back, "They're not going to deport immigrants!" Agitated and upset, Paul gives the other guy a shove. And that's when Gounedi Traore steps in.

Traore, 26, grew up in some of the other gritty projects like Clichy-sous-Bois that ring Paris, one of 15 children of a Malian street cleaner. He lives here with his girlfriend in a one-room apartment, a block away from his parent's flat. He works here, too, as a mediator hired by the local council. His job: to counsel the area's poor youth, and at night to look for potential trouble—and to stop it before it starts. When he sees that the argument over deportation could turn ugly, he positions himself between the two men, urging them to head on home. Traore deplores the violence that has racked France, but he knows firsthand the anger and resentment that fueled it. "If someone has a record with the police, he's finished," says Traore, who's tall and lean with a friendly yet authoritative manner. "They won't get a job. I tell them, 'Look, I've been through misery and I'm a bit integrated. I have my own apartment.' To them, I'm a success story."

France will need a lot more success stories like Traore's if it is to quell the rage burning across the country. The riots lit up some 300 towns and cities—over the weekend, clashes broke out in Lyons' city center and on the outskirts of Toulouse—and cast a harsh light on how France's ideal of equality has failed people from dreary banlieues like Clichy-sous-Bois. The state is officially color- and religion-blind, so successive French governments have refused to acknowledge, or even compile data on, racial or ethnic origins. There is a single, unified French identity; no combined identity of Algerian French or French Malian is recognized.

However well-intended, the doctrine proved less effective in practice. Assigned to initially inviting public-housing projects, immigrants, their children and grandchildren ultimately found themselves cap-

tives of places like Clichy-sous-Bois, segregated from white society and marginalized from economic and political life. Second- and third-generation French grew more disillusioned, more resentful and more alienated. It's an explosive socioeconomic mix that exists across Europe (see following story), and has now erupted in France. The task ahead is to make the country's lofty rhetoric match reality. The young men behind the violence "are rioting, not because they hate the Republic," says Dounia Bouzar, an anthropologist who has worked extensively with banlieue delinquents, "but because they want to be included in it."

Job opportunities would be a good start. Discrimination is illegal, but banlieue residents routinely report that they are turned away once a potential employer spots an Arabic name or undesirable postal code. To document the problem, Sorbonne sociologist Jean-François Amadieu sent identical résumés in response to more than 250 job ads; the only difference was that he gave some applicants Arab-sounding and others more "French" names. Résumés from white male applicants with French names elicited five times more job offers than those that could have come from North Africans. "There's a massive gap between what we say and what we do," says Amadieu.

Salem Sefrioui, 29, an architect living in

the upscale 16th arrondissement of Paris, is one of the lucky few who have escaped the banlieue. Born in Casablanca, he grew up in Colombes outside Paris, but with the advantage of educated and supportive parents. They pulled all the strings they could to get him into the elite Lycée La Folie St. James in Neuilly, using his grandfather's more respectable address there. "I always make sure to include the fact that I speak Arabic on my CV," says Sefrioui. "I have two nationalities, not two half-nationalities. But my story might have been a different if



FACE OFF: Sarkozy met police on Paris' Champs Elysées, above; De Villepin, far right, vowed to help the banlieues; Chirac said little



COLLINS/ON. JEAN MARC/LE PROGRES/MAPIE



LAW AND DISORDER: Riot police move in to arrest youths in the city center of Lyons in central France



ing ills are there" even in bucolic Blois. Youness Ouzaanik, 21, a smart, funny young man who lives in Blois' projects, couldn't agree more. "The banlieues are as much a part of Blois as the castle," he says. "I'd like to see our neighborhood included in the tourist brochures."

Perruchot won office in 2001 on promises to restore order and renovate the banlieues, which he's tried to do by more than doubling the number of municipal police, and by exploiting tax-exemption schemes to encourage businesses to relocate to designated banlieues. But reversing decades of decay doesn't happen fast. "There's nothing left in our area," laments Mourad Salah-Brahim, 21. "Virtually every business has moved out."

I hadn't gotten out of Colombes."

The problem is not limited to big cities like Paris. Riots even reached places like Blois, a gorgeous medieval town in the Loire valley associated more with castles and cathedrals than with conflicts. But Blois has troubled banlieues of its own, and in two days of violence last week around 20 cars were torched and bands of youths fought running battles with riot cops. The mayor, Nicolas Perruchot, thinks the violence was inspired by television images of unrest elsewhere, but admits "the underly-

Back in their gilded Paris offices, the French government didn't seem to get it. Apart from a brief, uninspiring call for calm on Nov. 6 and a few comments at a press conference last Thursday, President Jacques Chirac remained largely invisible throughout the crisis. Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin announced that the government would spend more on public housing, intensify its efforts to find jobs for unemployed youth, and allow local author-

ities to declare curfews (about 100 communities did, including Lyons). For many, though, the measures were reminiscent of the well-meaning but ineffectual initiatives announced by past governments.

Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy became a cause of the crisis for some, and its solution for others. Sarkozy acknowledged that deprivation and discrimination were behind the riots, but refused to apologize for his tough talk. "It's not just unemployment, injustice and racism," he said on television. "It's fear generated by gangs that live from drugs and stolen cars." That hard line has earned Sarkozy the scorn of some youths. "I will slit his throat or shoot him," says Osman, 14, to approval from his middle-school classmates in Clichy-sous-Bois.

Sarkozy has tapped into a craving for law and order in France, where most people recoiled from the rioters' defiance. He said he would deport any foreigners convicted in connection with the violence. But he showed a softer side, too, favoring "positive-discrimination" programs, and even advocated giving foreigners the right to vote in local elections. A poll commissioned by *Le Journal du Dimanche* last week showed that 53% of those questioned said they had confidence in Sarkozy to solve the problems of the banlieues, with 52% for De Villepin and 29% for Chirac. "Sarkozy's language is understood perfectly well," says Nadine Morano, a member of the governing Union for a Popular Movement who grew up in the tough Cédre Bleu housing project in Nancy. "He's the only real alternative for changing the country."

Maybe so. But before he can change the country, he'll have to change the banlieues. Over the weekend, police intercepted a flurry of e-mails, blogs and text messages calling on rioters to leave their gutted ghettos and do some damage to the Champs Elysées, the Arc de Triomphe and the Bastille. Some 3,000 extra police were deployed throughout Paris. Sarkozy makes no secret of his ambition to succeed Chirac as President, and often refers to a "rupture" with the past to describe how he would govern. But in Clichy-sous-Bois and hundreds of places like it across France, rupture has already occurred. If the rifts that have been exposed over the past two weeks are not healed, violence could flare again. —With reporting by Bruce Crumley/Blois, Julia Mason, Sayem Mehmood, Grant Rosenberg and Vivienne Wall/Paris

OUTSIDE LOOKING IN

IT'S NOT JUST FRANCE. ALL OF EUROPE IS STRUGGLING TO INTEGRATE ETHNIC MINORITIES INTO THE MAINSTREAM BY JOHANNA McGEARY

Adnan, Reda and Iachim could be brothers:

young, struggling, second-generation Europeans with a grievance. The wiry, kinetic Adnan, 22, owns his own mobile-phone shop, but he's still subjected to regular stop-and-search by the local cops, just like most young men in his neighborhood. When he takes his sharp Mini Cooper for a drive, he says, "The police stop me three times a month, asking, 'Where did *you* get the money to buy that car?'" Reda, a short, dark-haired 21-year-old, is about to finish vocational school and hopes to find a job in electronics, but says, "When I walk down the street, people say 'blackhead' just because I've got black hair. Whenever a job requires contact with the customer, the management never takes a blackhead." At 26, Iachim is articulate, intelligent and very frustrated. Despite a diploma in retail management,

he's prepared to do any kind of work, "even if it's cleaning floors." But for six months, he's been rejected for every job he has applied for. "I never thought it would be this hard," he says, "and it makes me very angry. I feel the system is not giving me a break." Adnan is British, of Pakistani descent; Reda is a German of Palestinian origin; and Iachim is Dutch, with Moroccan parents. Like the angry young men who rampaged through France for over two weeks, they are part of Europe's embittered underclass.

France is not the only country where the ideals of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* have failed whole generations. Nor is it the only nation struggling to come up with the right ways to blend people of different colors, creeds and cultures into once homogenous societies. Integration is still very much a work in progress. With debris from the riots still smoldering, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin acknowledged just that: "France

is wounded. It cannot recognize itself in its streets. The effectiveness of our model of integration is in question." Across the rest of the Continent, Europeans are asking whether the pent-up frustration of ethnic minorities might erupt elsewhere. Here's a look at what's working—and what's not.

■ BRITANNIA'S RULES

KHADDAM HUSSAIN ARRIVED IN THE northern English city of Bradford at the age of 8. His parents, like many Pakistanis in the early 1960s, had come to fill their former colonial rulers' demand for cheap labor. While his father kept his head down working at the woolen mill, Khaddam coped with racism. "I was the only Asian in the whole school," he says. "Day in and day out I got beaten up and some teachers just stood there." Soon, though, there were few white faces left in the Manningham district, where his family lived. Asians moved

into the terraced houses and eventually, Pakistani supermarkets banned alcohol. Children learned little English and not much else at ill-funded schools that were almost 95% Asian. As they grew older, young men complained of police insensitivity and borderline brutality. Some, like Khaddam's son Adnan, had enough resourcefulness and family help to start their own businesses, but many can't find a way out of the ghetto.

The eruption came when a minor clash between white and Asian gangs exploded into three days of violence in July 2001. Young Asian men turned their rage on the police and ravaged the symbols of "white culture," like a BMW showroom and a club for white working-class men. Many of the older generation were shocked their sons were involved. But young men with Bradford rather than Punjabi accents were no longer operating by their fathers' rules.

BERLIN
Hussein, center,
and his two
friends work at
the Naunyn Ritzke
youth center,
where they help
kids learn how
to fit in and look
for jobs

"They feel a distance from their own parents," says Martin Baines, a West Yorkshire police inspector who has worked on police-community relations for 25 years. "They've created a culture and identity all their own."

The riots coincided with the publication of a report on ways to ease cross-cultural tensions. The report painted a grim portrait of a place where white flight had left behind an underclass of poor ethnic minorities and concluded that the nation was in danger of becoming a collection of separate communities leading parallel lives with their own places of worship, em-

ployment, schools, community organizations, languages and social networks.

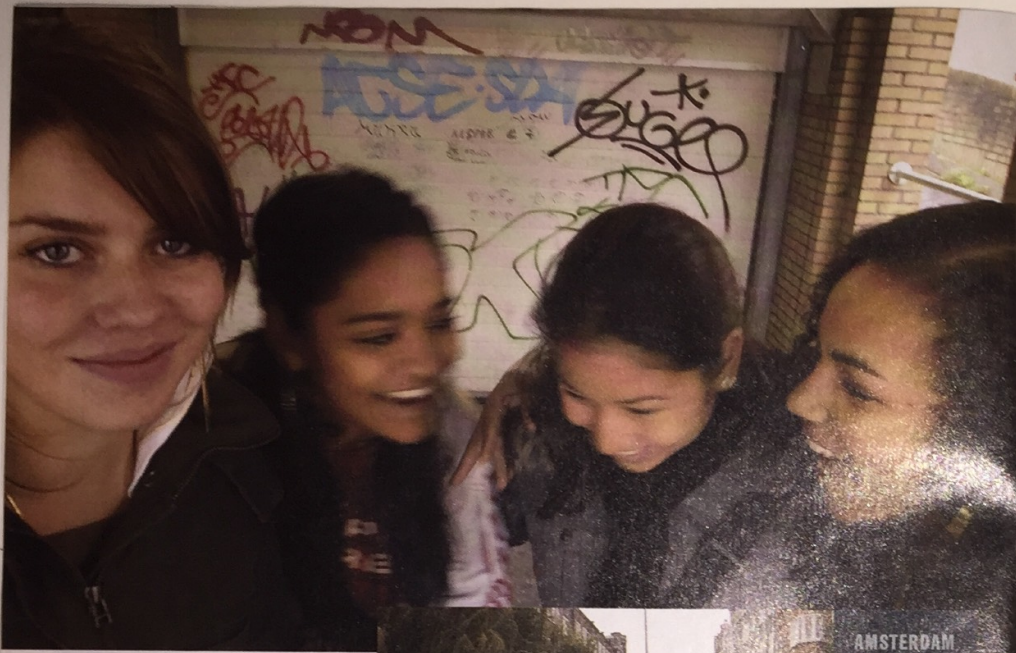
Bradford exemplified the perils of Britain's 20-year approach to integrating its immigrants. Responding to the open racism that greeted the first postwar wave from the old empire, Britain grudgingly decided to let the different identities of its minorities flourish. Yet for more than a decade—and especially after the July attacks on London's transport system by alleged homegrown suicide bombers—the government has grown increasingly uneasy with passive multiculturalism. Trevor Phillips, the black chair of the Commission for Racial Equality,

recently fueled the debate when he charged Britain with "sleepwalking into segregation," with its emphasis on recognizing and respecting diverse cultures.

But Britain rejects U.S.-style affirmative action in favor of something less drastic: having the government take a more active interest in ensuring all its diverse citizens share enough values and common experiences to keep the country together. That can entail small things like encouraging a more profound sense of British citizenship through tests of national knowledge. And it can involve wholesale changes in how the police, for example, interact with minority communities. In Bradford, Baines works for a department that now has 4.1% minority police officers, regularly consults with an ethnic-liaison committee, broadcasts a radio program to the Asian audience, and works with locals to head off trouble before it can build into rioting. The difference in commu-

“WHEN A JOB REQUIRES CONTACT WITH CUSTOMERS, THE MANAGEMENT NEVER TAKES A BLACKHEAD.”

—REDA HUSSEIN,
youth worker



nity policing, he says, is that "We're on the ground, we can't run and hide."

Yet the steps are incremental. Bradford today is still a poor, uneasy mix of integration and discrimination. Ifkhar Hussain, manager of a restaurant wrecked by white youths in revenge for the 2001 riots, has helped rebuild a business that attracts a booming white clientele. But he is convinced racism lies behind difficulties he's had with the local authorities. And he is angry that the schools his children attend are still almost completely Asian. He supplements their lessons with private tutors and the kids, aged 18, 16 and 14, want to go to university. "But I worry because they haven't been to school with any whites," says Hussain. "How are they going to handle things when they go to university with them or when they start a job?"

■ DUTCH NEGLECT

IACHIM HICHAM CONSIDERS HIMSELF AS Dutch as any blond. His family, originally from Morocco, arrived in the Netherlands 35 years ago, and he has lived all his life in the West Amsterdam neighborhood of De Baarsjes. "This is my home. I'm an Amsterdammer," he says. "But I'm not treated like one." In the six months he has been looking for work, he has seen his Dutch friends, even those with less education, easily find jobs. But he says his



AMSTERDAM

This group of teenage friends from Jewish, Surinamese, Indonesian and Moroccan backgrounds is typical of the ethnic mix on the outskirts of the big Dutch city. Inset, here, the highest unemployment rates in the city.

Moroccan coloring and accent are an impediment. "My friend Arthur switches jobs two or three times a year," says Hicham.

The streets of De Baarsjes, just past the outer ring of Amsterdam's city center, look tidy, but misery hides in the long brick terraces. They are home to increasing numbers of resentful males of immigrant origin, mainly Moroccan but also Turkish and Surinamese. De Baarsjes has one of the largest concentration of minorities, and among the highest crime, unemployment and truancy rates in the city.

For years, the Dutch government welcomed immigrants and provided them with housing and welfare benefits. It let them assimilate or not, as they liked, and for a while, it worked. Despite their reputation

for tolerance, the Dutch allowed a growing chasm to develop between whites and ethnic minorities that turned neighborhoods like De Baarsjes into separate and unequal enclaves. The school system provides state money to parents who want to set up their own schools around particular beliefs, encouraging educational—and religious—segregation. And tolerance often masked indifference to whether minorities succeeded. Today, some 1.7 million non-Western immigrants and their children make up 10% of the Dutch population. More than half are Muslims who brought with them a traditionalist culture that fits uneasily in freewheeling, secular Holland.

The façade of peaceful multiculturalism was shattered in 2002 by the rise to political

prominence of Pim Fortuyn, who wanted to close the door to new immigrants, and then by his assassination in the same year. The ugly rifts in society were again laid bare two years later when a Dutch Moroccan murdered filmmaker Theo van Gogh, claiming he had "insulted Allah." In the aftermath the country made a sharp political turn. The current government has adopted citizenship exams and compulsory Dutch courses. It has also enacted one of the toughest political asylum laws in Europe.

However discouraging such laws might feel to Dutch immigrants, sociologist Godfried Engbersen says "the situation in our suburbs has not yet deteriorated as badly as in France." Even problematic areas like De Baarsjes remain comparatively better integrated than the banlieue. Authorities make a point of building well-to-do housing near poor neighborhoods to stem white flight. But a stagnant economy and cutbacks in generous welfare benefits mean fewer jobs for the poorest—like Hicham. Hatim Benjelloun, a counselor at La Rainbow youth center in De Baarsjes, says damage has already been done. The guys who come in, he says, see no future for themselves in Dutch society, "even though they're just as Dutch as Klaas or Jan."

■ THE GERMAN WAY

MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS IN KREUZBERG, a district of Berlin known for its high density of Turkish immigrants, used to break down in open brawls between kids and police. But this year, Reda Hussein, whose parents are Palestinian, and his friends worked with police to keep the crowds in order. "This is our home," says the muscular young man in the thick accent of a native Berliner. "It's really lousy when the neighborhood you live in gets torn apart. People are frustrated. But projects like this give us hope and I think that makes things different here than in Paris."

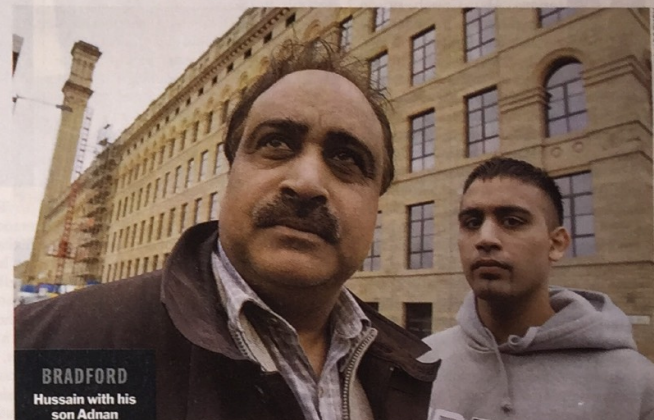
In the streets of Kreuzberg and Neukölln, one of Berlin's toughest immigrant areas, there don't seem to be many angry young men wandering around. In these largely Turkish neighborhoods, the young are more focused on finding opportunities to improve their lives. And, after decades of neglecting the guest workers who were supposedly going home one day, Germany is beginning to help them. It was a long time coming, admits Marieluise Beck, the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration: "Germany overslept by 30

years." But in 2000 the government agreed to grant citizenship to German-born children of immigrant workers. Now more immigrants are entering the professions and taking part in politics: 15 Turks or Kurds sit in various levels of the German government.

A key reason for Germany's relative success may simply be that its main minority is Turkish—one-third of the country's estimated 8 million immigrant community. Kemal Sahin, the president of the Association of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists in Europe, says Germany's Turkish community runs 65,000 businesses, employing some 323,000 people. "Creating jobs is the very best way to avoid here what has happened in France," he says. The community's entrepreneurial culture is evident in the Turkish-language edition of the Berlin yellow pages, packed with glossy ads

law enacted on Jan. 1, the government is funding a raft of programs to nudge it along. One pays for "District Mothers," a program to visit immigrant women afraid to venture into the larger community; another, called Quartiersmanagement, includes résumé training and homework tutorials.

But Germany should be careful not to be complacent, says Cem Ozdemir, the first ethnic Turk to win national office and now a member of the European Parliament. The country's educational system still shuts out immigrant children. "If you don't give the young access to the best schools," he warns, "you will lose contact with these people." More young men in Neukölln, says Buschkowsky, are turning to "religiosity" and a fundamentalist lifestyle. Tackling discrimination in education and employment will help, he says, but



BRADFORD

Hussain with his son Adnan outside an old woolen mill that once employed immigrants

for Turkish businesses.

Yet there is still disadvantage. If any neighborhood was ever going to blow, it would be Neukölln. About half the population of Neukölln North and one-third of total residents are immigrants and their descendants. Unemployment reaches 25%, twice the national average, and climbs to 45% among the young. But Mayor Heinz Buschkowsky says residents are cushioned by Germany's expansive dole. A single unemployed man, he says, gets €800 a month, and families can receive a total of €2,000 a month in state payments. "We pay for our social peace," says Buschkowsky.

Germans have also come to accept that integration doesn't just happen. Under a

"we must get our values into their heads."

That may be the ultimate solution. Western European nations will continue to construct different models for integrating restive minorities. Yet success requires addressing the same basic questions: What core values can be demanded from every citizen? Which areas of difference should be maintained and respected? How to ensure that economic and political disparities are narrowed? And how to make people feel part of a shared community? Difficult as the answers may be, France serves as a warning that all of Europe needs to find them. —Reported by William Boston and Andrew Purvis/Berlin, Abi Daruwalla and Joost van Egmond/Amsterdam, J.F.O. McAllister/Bradford and Ozlem Uçucu/London