

Part I

Badlands



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Introduction: The Fear of 'the *Banlieue*'

The accusations were serious: armed robbery, killing of three police officers and murder of one taxi driver. They were hurled at a young woman of 23 years old and her companion, a young man of about the same age, who was shot dead during his confrontation with the police. The evidence presented at the court, and the presence of eyewitnesses, left little hope for the young woman. The prosecuting attorney insisted on the truly cynical nature of the acts of the two, which, it was maintained, could not be justified by the circumstances. The prosecutor claimed:

[They] are not *terrorists*, they are not Bonnie and Clyde, they are not the characters of *Natural Born Killers*. They are neither *zonards*,¹ nor *drug addicts*, nor *banlieue outcasts* [*des exclus de banlieue*]. [She] is not the daughter of *immigrants*, her mother was a teacher and helped her with homework in the evenings. These are two students who dropped out of college, gave up on work, who chose to live in a squat and to live from hold-ups, because 'money is freedom'. (*Libération*, 30 September 1998: 15; emphasis added)

What the accused were *not* associated with – terrorism, drugs, exclusion, immigration – exemplifies some of the terms that have been articulated with the spatial references of the prosecuting attorney – *zones* and *banlieues* – in the last two decades. Was the attorney, with these statements, recognizing the difficulties of growing up or living in a *zone* (being a 'zonard') or *banlieue*? Or was she, if unwittingly, demonstrating the naturalization of crime as associated with *zones* and *banlieues*? If the accused were *zone* or *banlieue* inhabitants, would their acts be seen as more 'natural' rather than truly cynical? In a republic that cherishes so dearly the principle of equality, how can such spatial references be presented as potentially mitigating circumstances?

The attorney's argument gives us a sense of the pervasiveness of the negative image of *banlieues*, and shows how common and accepted this image has become (although there are many prestigious *banlieues* as well). This book is about a specific urban policy programme conceived to address the problems of social housing neighbourhoods in *banlieues* of French cities, which, as I will try to show, contributed largely to the consolidation of negative images associated with them. This programme was initiated by the Socialist government as an urgent response to the so-called 'hot summer' of 1981, marked by revolts in the *banlieues* of several cities. 'Urban policy', hereafter, refers to this particular policy. Conceived originally as a 'spatialization of social policies' (Chaline, 1998), it was regrouped later in 1988 under the generic term '*la politique de la Ville*' as a national urban policy with the *banlieues* as its main object. As the issues around *banlieues* have wider resonance, with connotations ranging from threats to French identity to terrorism, French urban policy, as Béhar (1999) wrote, has probably been the most debated public policy of the last two decades. This book provides a wide-ranging analysis of this policy by bringing together policy discourses and alternative voices expressed in its intervention areas. It offers an approach to urban policy that makes space central, and looks at the ways in which space is imagined and used in policy formation in the broader context of state restructuring. In so doing, it provides insight into the relationship between space and politics.

The French case is particularly important for exploring the relationship between space and politics, as space – and not community, as in the British and North American urban policy experience – has been the main object of French urban policy. This is almost necessarily so since the French republican tradition emphasizes a common culture and identity, and any reference to communities is deliberately avoided because they imply separatism, which is unacceptable under the principle of the 'one and indivisible' republic. Yet, while space remained the main object, there have been considerable changes in how space has been imagined and manipulated over the two decades of this policy. This book makes these changes and their varying political implications central to its approach to urban policy. It shows how French urban policy has constituted its spaces of intervention, associated problems with them, legitimized particular forms of state intervention, and how alternative voices formulated in such spaces challenged official designations. It situates its analysis in a broader political and economic context, showing how it feeds down into urban policy.

This book's approach to urban policy follows from a central premise to consider space not as given, but as produced through various practices of articulation. Since urban policy conceives of its object spatially, I see urban policy as a practice of articulation that constitutes space, an institutionalized practice that defines spaces (i.e. its spaces of intervention). Thus,

I maintain that urban policy constitutes its spaces of intervention as part of the policy process, rather than by acting on given spaces.

However, each policy discourse and programme is guided by particular ways of imagining space. For example, spaces of intervention may be imagined as self-contained areas with rigid boundaries, as parts of a larger network, or as part of a relational geography. Each of these ways of conceiving space has different implications for the constitution of perceived problems and the formulation of solutions to them, ranging from limited local initiatives to regional distributive policies. Thus, I insist that conceptualizations of space matter in policy, and look at the ways in which space is conceived and their policy and political implications.

Although urban policy is one way of constituting space, it is not the only one. Therefore, I bring together official discourses and alternative voices, and insist that analyses of urban policy consider policy from above and voices from below as a contestation for space. In other words, rather than merely focusing on the official discourses on *banlieues*, I try to give voice to alternative discourses formulated in *banlieues*.

My analysis, further, situates French urban policy in a wider political and economic context, and focuses on how it has constituted its spaces of intervention and how alternative voices have challenged its official descriptions. Theoretically informed by Jacques Rancière's political thought – which draws attention to the relationship between space and politics – and using Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer's (1985) notion of 'the state's statements' – which draws attention to state's practises of articulation – I see urban policy as a particular regime of representation that consolidates a certain spatial order through descriptive names, spatial designations, categorisations, definitions, mappings and statistics. In this sense, it is a place-making practice that spatially defines areas to be treated, associates problems with them, generates a certain discourse, and proposes solutions accordingly. I do not, therefore, see urban policy as a merely administrative and technical issue, and argue against such an approach that it is tightly linked to other issues, ranging from immigration politics to economic restructuring. Instead, I adopt an eclectic approach that carries some of the features of political economy, social constructionist and governmentality approaches to urban policy. Political economy approaches relate urban policy to the larger restructurings of the state, and highlight processes of neoliberalization, premised on the extension of market relations that privilege competition, efficiency and economic success. While endorsing the attention given to the relationship between urban policy and state restructuring, I argue that there are other political rationalities that affect contemporary transformations of states and urban policy, and that equal attention should be given to established political traditions – in this case, the French republican tradition, which emphasizes the social obligations of the state

towards its citizens as well as a common culture and identity, seen to be the basis of the integrity of the 'one and indivisible' republic. Such an emphasis on state restructuring and established political traditions shows that the contemporary restructuring of the French state involves an articulation of neoliberalism with the French republican tradition, producing a hybrid form of neoliberalism. It also points to the relationship between urban policy and state restructuring, which, in the French case, is manifest in the consolidation of the penal state mainly in and through the spaces of urban policy.

Although there are many parallels between the approach I adopt in this book and social constructionist and governmentality approaches, two major differences remain. First, I try to avoid the implication (usually associated with constructivist approaches; see Campbell, 1998 for a critique) that policy makers and other state actors are consciously and deliberately engaged in a discursive construction of 'reality' from a privileged place outside the domain of their very engagement, with the tools and force of language at their disposal. What interests me here is the ways in which policies put in place certain 'sensible evidences' (policy documents, spatial designations, mappings, categorizations, namings and statistics) and their effects: that is, how they help to consolidate a particular spatial order and encourage a certain way to think about it. As we will see, the kinds of sensible evidences employed, their significance and effects depend highly on the broader political and economic context; they do not, in other words, materialize in a vacuum.

Second, I argue that analyses of urban policy guided by these approaches have given insufficient attention to the issue of space (which is also observed by some scholars committed to these approaches; see, for example, Murdoch, 2004; Raco, 2003). Social constructionist approaches, while helpfully focusing on the construction of urban problems and policy discourses, neglect the role that space plays in such constructions. Governmentality approaches, on the other hand, present such an overarching argument that there is little or no room left for the difference that space makes in policy formation and resistance to it. I share the view with the social constructionist approaches that problems and policies associated with spaces of urban policy are constructed – rather than already given – but insist that equal attention be given to the ways in which such spaces are imagined and used in the formation of problems and policies. With the governmentality approaches, I concur that the construction of spaces through urban policy has a governmental dimension, but maintain that there is no inherent politics to such constructions. In other words, variations in the ways space is imagined and manipulated matter.

Approached this way, the French experience offers us the following four lessons on the nature of urban policy and on the relationship between space

and politics. First, urban policy has to be understood in a range of established political traditions – in this case, French republicanism – and major national and international events – from riots in Brixton to demonstrations of high school students in Paris, from the Rushdie affair to the Islamic headscarf affair, from the Intifada to riots in Los Angeles. Second, the spaces of urban policy cannot be taken for granted, and any analysis of urban policy has to critically analyse the ways in which policies constitute their spaces of intervention. Third, ways of imagining space influence both the definition of problems associated with intervention areas and policy responses to them. In more general terms, different ways of imagining space have different political implications. Finally, both governance and resistance are spatial, place-making practices. In this sense, there is an ongoing contestation for space: what the official policy discourse constitutes as ‘badlands’ also become sites and organizing principles of political mobilization with democratic ideals.

The ‘badlands’ in question are the *banlieues* of French cities: that is, neighbourhoods in the peripheral areas of cities. In order to understand what is at stake in French urban policy, we need first to get a sense of what the *banlieues* stand for.

The Colour of Fear

Banlieue literally means suburb, but it carries different connotations from the ones associated with the British or North American suburb. Originally an administrative concept, the term *banlieue* geographically denotes peripheral areas of cities in general.² Such a geographical designation is not necessarily negative (as in ‘the *banlieue*’). Nevertheless, the term evokes an image of excluded places, as its etymological origin suggests:

‘*Ban*’ comes from the earliest medieval times, when it meant both the power of command and the power of exclusion as part of the power of command. Banned [*Banni*], banishment [*banissement*], *banlieue* – all these terms have the same origin; they refer to places of exclusion. Clearly, *banlieues* have existed independently from terms to designate them, they have made and often managed their own history, they have not simply been excluded places, but their existence does nevertheless express this will to create on the outskirts of the city places that do not belong to the system. (Paul-Levy in *Banlieues* 89, 1986: 125)³

Now the term mostly evokes an image of a peripheral area with concentrations of large-scale, mostly high-rise social housing projects, and problems associated, in the US and the UK, with inner-city areas. It no longer serves

merely as a geographical reference or an administrative concept, but stands for alterity, insecurity and deprivation. In order to emphasize the term's origin and geographical connotations, I use '*banlieue*' instead of 'suburb' throughout the text.

In the early 1980s, Rey (1999: 274) writes, the *banlieues* of large French cities began to 'arouse a feeling of fear', a feeling that continued to increase in the decades to follow, becoming one of the major 'phobias' of the French in the new millennium (*Libération*, 8 April 2002: 4–5). The term '*banlieue*' designates the social housing estates of popular neighbourhoods in the peripheral areas of cities as threats to security, social order and peace. This threat, furthermore, has become closely associated with the populations living in *banlieues*, often defined in 'ethnic' terms. The fear of the *banlieue* is closely associated with a feeling of insecurity and a fear of immigration (Rey, 1999).

A similar observation is made by Hargreaves, who argues that the 1990s was a turning point in the eventual association of the *banlieue* with a feeling of insecurity and a fear of immigration:

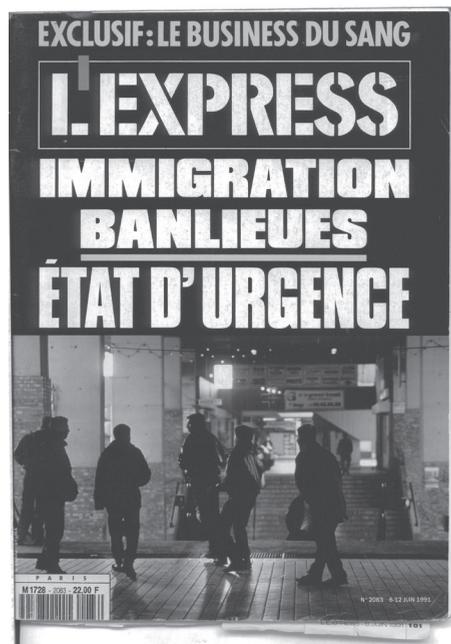
During the 1990s, a new social space has been delineated in France: that of the '*banlieue(s)*' (literally, 'suburb(s)'). A term that once served simply to denote peripheral parts of urban areas has become a synonym of alterity, deviance, and disadvantage. The mass media have played a central role in this reconstruction, in the course of which they have disseminated and reinforced stereotypical ideas of people of immigrant origin as fundamentally menacing to the established social order. (Hargreaves, 1996: 607; emphasis added)

Hargreaves exemplifies the media creation of 'the *banlieues* as a news category' and the amalgamation of 'urban deprivation, immigration, and social order' in the 1990s with an issue of the journal *L'Express*, which presented a cover story under the title '*Banlieues – Immigration: State of Emergency*' (5–12 June 1991). The same journal, however, had presented another similar cover story almost two decades earlier under the title '*Banlieues: "Hooligans" are Talking to You*'. The subtitle read: 'At the gates of large cities, thousands of hoodlums are produced' (3–9 September 1973). As the cover drawing and the photos depicted them, the hooligans and hoodlums of *L'Express* in 1973 were all white. They would change colour in 1991, but the spatial reference would remain the same. In this sense, *L'Express* best exemplifies the changing colour of the fear of 'the *banlieue*' from the 1970s into 1990s (Figures 1.1 and 1.2).

Media reviews provide clear examples of the changing image of the *banlieues* in the last two decades (see, for example, Collovald, 2000, 2001; Hargreaves, 1996; Macé, 2002). However, the current image of the *banlieues* is not simply the product of journalistic accounts. Many of the



1.1



1.2

Figures 1.1 and 1.2 The changing colour of 'the banlieue' (1.1 (head): 'Banlieues: "Hooligans" are Talking to You'. Source: *L'Express*, 3–9 September, 1973; 1.2 (foot): 'Banlieues – Immigration: State of Emergency'. Source: *L'Express*, 5–12 June, 1991)

journalistic categories used to frame *banlieues* have been *institutionalized* by state policies. The period in which the *banlieues* became articulated with issues of immigration, insecurity and social order was a period of intense official engagement with the question of *banlieues* – notably through urban policy, which became increasingly concerned with issues of immigration and insecurity, often to the detriment of its initial social and democratic ideals. It is these changes that I will chart in the following chapters, placing them in broader political and economic context, and relating them to the contemporary restructuring of the French state along increasingly authoritarian and exclusionary lines.

As I will try to show, the contemporary restructuring of the French state is marked by a strong attachment to the republican tradition. The French conception of the republic emphasizes a common culture and identity, fragmentation of which is seen as a threat to the social and political integrity of France. The republican tradition is based on the presupposition that ‘without a common culture and a sense of common identity, the political as well as physical integrity of France would be “threatened”’ (Jennings, 2000: 586). There is, therefore, little or no room for claims rising from ‘differences’. The French citizen is a universal individual-citizen, directly linked to the nation-state, and national-political membership requires the acceptance of French cultural values (Feldblum, 1999; Safran, 1990). There is no official recognition of ethnicity, race or religion as intermediary means for obtaining particular rights, and the very notion of minority is strongly rejected (de Rudder and Poiret, 1999). Such a conception, in the context of fascinating diversity, generates a firm suspicion towards all kinds of particularisms. As Jennings argues,

[T]he political project of nation-building pursued by the French state led not only to a weak conception of civil society but also to the persistent fear of the dangers of ‘communities’ operating within the public sphere. Within this project, citizenship was grounded upon a set of democratic political institutions rather than upon a recognition of cultural and/or ethnic diversity. Republicanism itself thus became a vehicle of both inclusion *and* exclusion. (2000: 597)

It is from this deep attachment to the republican tradition that follows what Hargreaves (1997: 180) calls a republican myth of the French nation characterized by an ‘apparent blindness or outright hostility to cultural diversity’, which not only leaves little or no room to cultural ‘differences’ (Wieviorka, 1998), but also enhances ‘a system of intimidation that interdicts all protest social movements on the part of minority groups, without providing them the means to fight against inequalities and oppression of which they remain the victims’ (de Rudder and Poiret, 1999: 398–99).

Such a concern with French identity and cultural differences was perhaps best exemplified by a 1992 report of the *Haut Conseil à l'Intégration* (HCI), a council created in 1989 to advise the government on the issue of integration based on a 'republican model'.

Notions of a 'multicultural society' and the 'right to be different' are unacceptably ambiguous. It is true that the concept of the nation as a cultural community [...] does appear unusually open to outsiders, since it regards an act of voluntary commitment to a set of values as all that is necessary. But it would be wrong to let anyone think that different cultures can be allowed to become fully developed in France. (HCI, 1992; cited in Hargreaves, 1997: 184)

It should be noted, however, that there has been a renewed enthusiasm for the republican tradition with nationalistic overtones since the 1990s, which I refer to as 'republican nationalism'. The rise of republican nationalism has been observed by many scholars with regard, in particular, to citizenship and immigration policies (see, for example, Balibar, 2001; Blatt, 1997; Feldblum, 1999; Tévanian and Tissot, 1998). As we will see, urban policy has also been influenced by the development and deployment of republican nationalism since the 1990s.

Before moving on, a preliminary explanation of certain notions might be helpful as the republican tradition shapes political debate and policy discourse in a particular way. We will see that the following four notions are commonly used in policy discourse and debates around the *banlieues*: 'communitarianism', 'ghetto', 'social mixity' and 'positive discrimination'. These notions may sound ordinary and their meanings self-evident (except, probably, the last one), but they connote particular issues and carry remarkable political weight in the French context, where a common culture and identity is emphasized as a basic republican presupposition.

'Communitarianism' (*communautarisme*) is basically used to refer to 'ethnic' communities, formation of which is seen as a threat to the cultural and political integrity of the republic. It implies 'ethnic' separatism (Hargreaves, 1995). Ghettos are the spatially reified forms of this 'ethnic' nightmare haunting the republic. The term is often used in the media and by politicians, notably from the 1990s on, to refer to the deprived areas in the *banlieues*, comparing them to inner-city areas in the USA. Wacquant challenged this use in a series of articles (1992, 1993, 1995, 1999; see also de Rudder, 1992 and Hargreaves, 1995), and insisted that the comparison is highly misleading. The areas referred to as ghettos in France, he argued, are neither ethnically homogeneous nor large enough to function as self-contained areas apart from the central city. Furthermore, unemployment, poverty and crime rates are less severe compared to the ghettos

in the USA. Similarly, de Rudder (1992) argued that the neighbourhoods referred to as 'ghettos' are neither institutionalized nor homogeneous, that immigrants still remain a minority, and even when there are concentrations of immigrants, they are not homogeneous in terms of their origins: 'The use of the term "ghetto" here seems to have a more ideological than descriptive function. The word causes fear [. . .] among French natives as much as immigrants themselves. Thus both exclusion and social control (or even policing) over minorities are confirmed and even justified' (de Rudder, 1992: 261). A similar argument is advanced by Hargreaves: 'Minority groups are over-represented in disadvantaged parts of French cities, but it is empirically misleading and ideologically dangerous to speak of these areas as "ghettos"' (1995: 76). The 'ethnic' connotations of the term makes it politically significant in the French context, and, as we will see, it is widely used in policy discourse, notably from 1990 onwards.

The notion of 'social mixity' was first introduced during the debates around a law passed in 1991. Commonly referred to as the LOV (*Loi d'Orientation pour la Ville*), or as the 'anti-ghetto law', this law was aimed at a better distribution of social housing (reviewed in Chapter 4). There exists no official definition of this term, but the idea behind it is to prevent concentrations of 'ethnic' groups in social housing neighbourhoods. The term 'ethnic' is never used, since the republican principles do not allow such references.

The last notion that needs some clarification is 'positive discrimination', which may be seen as affirmative action *à la française*. In an article on French republicanism, Jennings writes that 'there remains an unshakeable insistence upon the secularism of the state and the refusal to recognize groups of persons. Only individuals exist in the eyes of the republic. There can be no possibility of a policy of "positive discrimination", precisely because it will contribute towards the "constitution of structured communities"' (2000: 583). Yet there exists a policy of positive discrimination in France, officially recognized in an urban policy programme of 1996 (the *Pacte de Relance*, reviewed in Chapter 5). Even before that, starting with the Educational Priority Areas (ZEPs, *Zone d'Education Prioritaire*) introduced by the Socialist government in 1981, there were *spatially designated areas* that were subject to differential treatment (i.e. to 'positive discrimination'). The 1996 programme officially used the term, but added the adjective 'territorial'. This, again, has to do with the republican tradition. As Jennings (2000) notes, positive discrimination based on ethnic, cultural and religious groups is not possible under the republic. Positive discrimination, then, is only made possible by a spatial approach, which does not, explicitly at least, discriminate on the basis of ethnic origins or cultural specificities.

In addition to these notions, it would also be helpful to clarify some of the more specific terms that are commonly used in policy discourse and the media – ‘zone’, ‘HLM’, ‘cité’ and ‘quartier’. What these terms have in common is that they are all negatively connoted spatial designations (remember the prosecuting attorney’s reference to ‘zones’ at the outset of this section), although they do not *necessarily* carry a negative meaning. ‘Zone’ (*la zone*, literally ‘zone, area’) was originally used to refer to the makeshift dwellings set up around the fortifications of Paris, and its meaning extended to refer to deprived peripheral areas. The Robert & Collins dictionary translates the term as ‘slum belt’. The term is still used in a common expression, *c’est la zone*, to refer to areas perceived as remote and/or undesirable.

The term ‘zone’ was also used in the post-war period in order to designate areas for urbanization at the peripheral areas of cities, starting in 1958 with the Priority Urbanization Areas (ZUPs, *Zones à Urbaniser par Priorité*). Since then, many ‘zones’ have been designated for policy purposes, as we will see in the following chapters. For the moment, however, it may be useful to keep in mind the distinction between these two uses of the term ‘zone’. The first one (as in *c’est la zone*) carries negative connotations, which has to do with the term’s historical usage to refer to deprived areas outside the city. The second one is used in the policy discourse (as in ZUPs) to designate areas of intervention. Although this second usage is not necessarily negative, the two ‘zones’, the name and the adjective, usually overlap.

The ‘HLM’ (*Habitation à Loyer Modéré*, Moderate Rent Housing) is French social housing. Although the dominant image of the HLM is one of large-scale, high-rise housing development in the peripheral areas of cities, not all the HLMs conform to this image. There are HLMs that are not large-scale and high-rise, located in the central areas of cities. The dominant image of the HLM follows from the post-war urbanization pattern of rapid and mass construction in the peripheral areas of cities where land was available and cheaper.

The same is true also for ‘cités’, which evoke an image similar to the stereotypical HLM. A *cité* is a group of buildings constructed according to a single plan, often isolated from (or at least clearly demarcated from) the rest of the urban fabric. A *cité* might be a *cité ouvrière* (similar to company towns), *cité universitaire* (halls of residence), *cité-jardin* (garden city) or *cité-dortoir* (dormitory town). The original meaning of the term had to do with the enclosed medieval cities, and some of the old city centres are still referred to as *cités* (for example, *l’île de la Cité* in Paris, *la Cité de Carcassonne*, *la Cité de Londres*). The term also has political connotations. When, for example, one talks about ‘the life of the *Cité*’ (*la vie de la Cité*), the reference is to the city as a political entity, implying its political management

and public life. When used in this sense, the first letter is usually, but not necessarily, capitalized. The notion of '*droit de cité*' also derives from the political implications of *cité*, and means 'right of abode'. However, the term *cité* is commonly used, to cite Wacquant's (1993: 367) definition, to refer to 'degraded working-class neighbourhoods harbouring large low-income housing tracts'. Hargreaves (1996) translates it as 'estates' or 'council estates'. I use the term without translating throughout the text as a reminder of its political implications.

Finally, '*quartier*', which is sometimes translated as 'quarter', as in 'the Latin Quarter'. *Quartier* literally means 'neighbourhood, district, area'. It could, therefore, be anywhere, in the centre of Paris, for example (the celebrated Latin Quarter is also a '*quartier*'). The term, however, acquires a particular meaning in urban policy discourse, and designates the urban policy neighbourhoods, which, mainly, are social housing neighbourhoods in the *banlieues*. Although I translate it as 'neighbourhood', it should be noted that in policy discourse, political debates and in the media, the generic term '*quartier*' refers to *certain* neighbourhoods (i.e. social housing neighbourhoods, mainly in the *banlieues*), and it conveys a negative image.⁴

To reiterate, my main point here is that French urban policy has to be seen in relation to the republican tradition, which informs its formulation of perceived problems, proposals for solutions and legitimations of state intervention. As we will see, this relationship has become more marked since the 1990s with the rise of republican nationalism, leading to the articulation of *banlieues* in increasingly 'ethnic' terms, as incompatible with – even 'threatening' – the integrity of the republic. Despite the republican anxiety over division and disunity, French urban policy operated with a more divisive spatiality, consolidating a rather rigid geography of 'threat'. This orientation also signalled the coming of the penal state, and largely undermined citizenship and justice movements in the *banlieues*.

Organization of the Book

The book is organised in three parts: (I) 'Badlands'; (II) 'The Police'; and (III) 'Justice in *Banlieues*'. Chapters 1 and 2 in Part I set the stage and propose an approach to urban policy with a focus on the spatial conceptualizations of intervention areas, and their varying political implications.

In the early 1980s, French urban policy was conceived with such stated ideals as 'self-management', 'social development of neighbourhoods', 'democratic management of the city' and 'the right to the city'. Since then, however, not only has urban policy's articulation of *banlieues* changed, but also other state institutions such as the Ministry of Justice and the French

Intelligence Service have become involved with the issue. In the process, earlier ideals have been overshadowed by increasingly authoritarian measures towards *banlieues* with a stated aim to ‘re-conquer no-go areas’. Chapters 3 to 5 in Part II – ‘The Police’ – demonstrate the transformation of urban policy from a more socially oriented policy to one obsessed with security. This transformation is placed in wider political and economic context, both national and international. Organized around three themes – ‘revolts’, ‘surveillance’ and ‘repression’ – that correspond to three periods (1981–9, 1990–2 and 1993–2006), chapters in this part show that while urban policy has been dealing with practically the same areas for years, the ways in which it conceived its spaces of intervention, associated problems with them, and legitimized particular forms of intervention have changed considerably.

Chapters 6 and 7 constitute Part III – ‘Justice in *Banlieues*’ – which takes its name from a resistance movement (as we will see in Chapter 4) that seeks to federate separate political mobilizations in *banlieues*. In Chapter 6, I tell the story of a notorious *banlieue*, Vaulx-en-Velin in the Lyon metropolitan area, which has been included in urban policy programmes since 1984. This *banlieue* was the site of furious revolts in 1990 (and later in 1992 and 2005, though of a smaller scale), and remains a major reference in debates around urban policy and *banlieues*. Through interviews with local officials and the members of a local political association founded by immigrant youth, I show that despite their negative stereotypical image as badlands, *banlieues* are also sites of political mobilization – or of ‘insurgent citizenship’, to use Holston’s (1998) notion⁵ – with democratic aspirations, drawing on a vocabulary of justice, citizenship and equality. This account is part of alternative voices that I insist should be taken into consideration in debates around urban policy. Chapter 7 presents an analysis of recurrent revolts in the *banlieues*, and shows that revolts are reactions to persistent problems such as mass unemployment, discrimination, racism and police violence, although their official framing (as explored in Part II) highlights less the difficult material conditions in the *banlieues* than the ‘threat’ posed by them to security and social order. Chapter 8 concludes the book by re-visiting the arguments laid out in the first chapter about space, politics and urban policy.