



Published on *Europa als Herausforderung* (<http://www.saisirleurope.eu>)

RIOTS - VIOLENCE AS POLITICS? ^[1]

Datum:

Freitag, 19. Mai 2017 (ganztägig) - Samstag, 20. Mai 2017 (ganztägig)

Teilprojekt:

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?Riots? continue to make headlines in the media, usually as a violent reaction to occurrences of police brutality, or in the context of broader political protest and movement mobilizations as, for example, in demonstrations turning violent or movements applying both violent and non-violent forms of action as given in the context of the ?Nuit Débout? protests directed against the labour market reforms 2016 in France. However, all too often the notion of ?riots? is used in a seemingly self-evident way, leaving more questions than answers. While there have arguably been new developments in conceptualizing and studying riots in recent scientific publications, this critical observation still holds true not only for discourses on riots in the mass media, but also for many scientific contributions dealing with riots in one way or the other.

Apart from describing clashes with the police, sometimes involving attacks on private or public property, looting or arson, there is no shared definition of the term ?riots?, nor is there an agreement on how to study riots, their effects concerning social change or processes of political subjectivation. With its focus on durable organizational frameworks and long-lasting processes of mobilization, the research on social movements often excludes the seemingly spontaneous, unorganized and violent forms of action. The fact that rioters may not always articulate their demands

in conventional ways, like offering messages and claims on signs and leaflets, seems to further interfere with their inclusion into Social Movement Studies. On the other hand, when riots are addressed through the lens of collective violence, they are often dealt with as one form of violent group behavior among others, thereby disregarding the specific motivational and structural aspects regularly involved in the emergence of riots. Therefore, both Social Movement Studies as well as research on (collective) violence often still exclude riots as a subject of research, or they tend to describe riots as somehow apolitical phenomena. Even when social inequality is acknowledged as a causal factor, studies often describe riots as a fatalistic reaction to social circumstances and living conditions, thus failing to recognize rioters as political subjects and the processes of political subjectivation involved.

Following up on the Riot-Workshop series of the Arbeitskreis Riot (AK Riot) at the Institut für Protest- und Bewegungsforschung (ipb) in Berlin, we are pleased to invite you to the 6th workshop as part of the international two-day conference "Riots. Violence as politics?".

For more informations, please see the attached PDF.

Angehängte Dateien:

 [riot_tagung_plakat.pdf](#) [3]

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Links:

[1] <http://www.saisirleurope.eu/de/content/riots-violence-politics>

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