

Some historically informed reflections on the police monopoly of violence in Europe

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« waakzaam en dienstbaar »

Legitimacy

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“A week ago (...) the grey automobiles of army officers roared through the streets of Berlin and the policemen stood like pillars of authority in the public squares. ... Yesterday morning all this was still here. Yesterday afternoon, nothing was left.”

Berliner Tageblatt, 10-11-1918

Max Weber/ Egon Bittner

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- Political legitimacy is founded on violence

Police:

- Permission to use force at the frontline, at the start of conflicts (micro level)
- Falling back on violence at the end (macro level)

Fear of escalation to the top

No longer valid

20th century: a violent century

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-1945:

- Violence in the colonies (1884-1915) is followed by violence in the European heartland (1914-1945)
- European police forces become professional but are unable to contain violence and partly become executioners of destructive violence

1945-1980's:

- Societal peace preserved by strengthening of force, contested in 60's

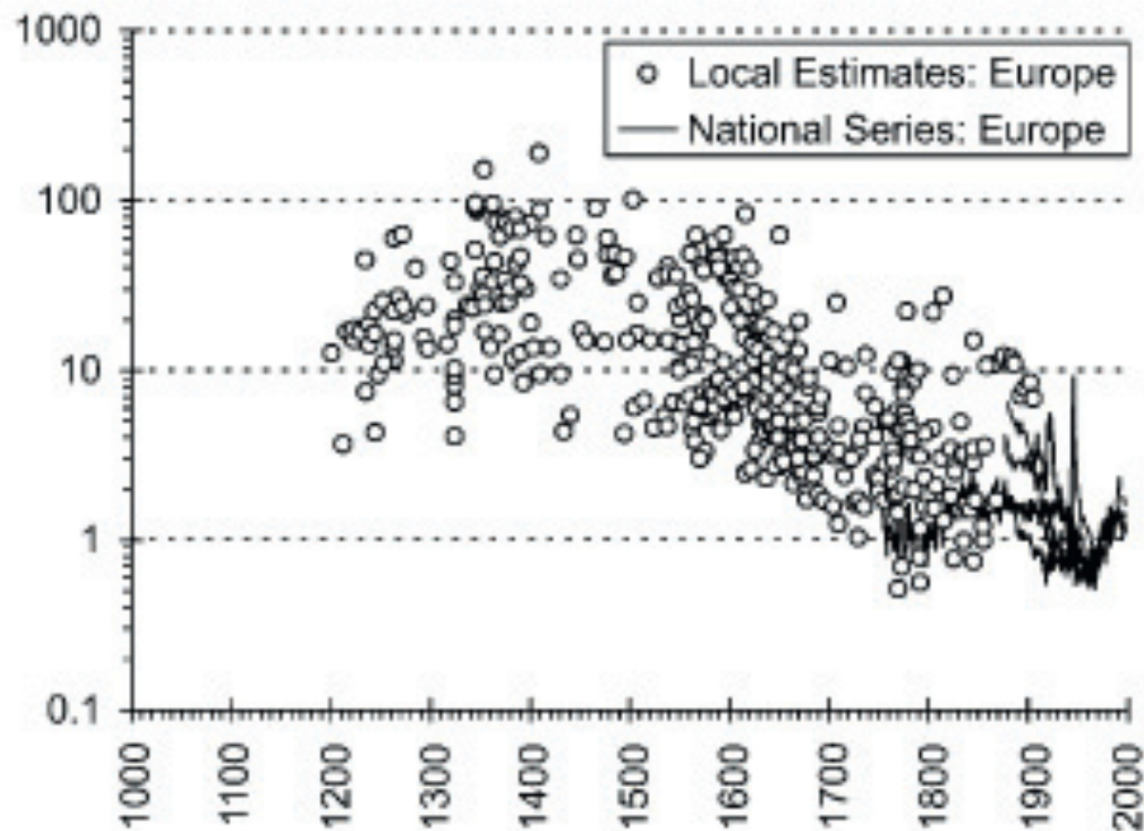
1980's-now:

- 80's violent decade
- Diversification of means to keep order (specialised units, intelligence, planning) and better protection of policemen in some parts of Europe
- Growth of violence against police

Private violence diminishes

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Source: M. Eisner (2003)

Largescale violence continues

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- 1960's
- 1980's

- Paris 2005
- London 2011
- Greece, Portugal, Spain, Italy 2010-2012
- Stockholm 2013

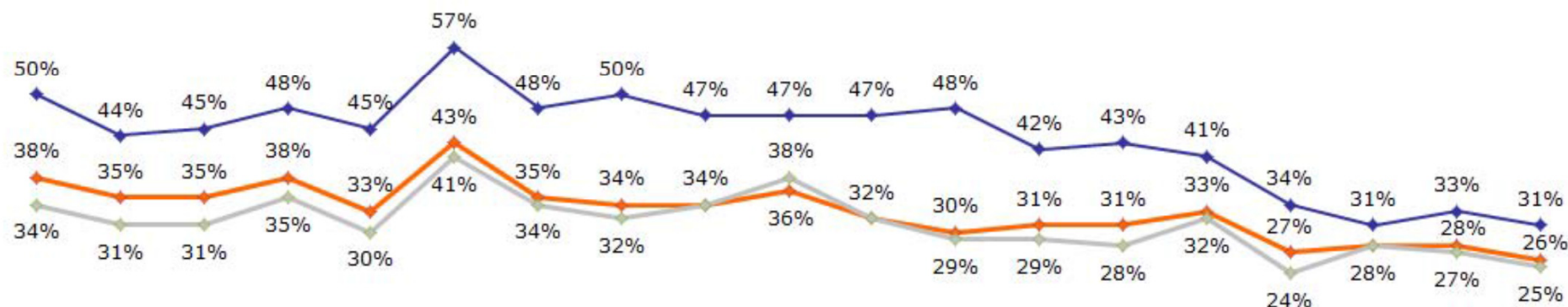
Political legitimacy 2004-2013 stable

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QA12. I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.
- Tend to trust -

◆ The European Union ◆ The (NATIONALITY) Parliament ◆ The (NATIONALITY) Government



Aut. 2004	Sp. 2005	Aut. 2005	Sp. 2006	Aut. 2006	Sp. 2007	Aut. 2007	Sp. 2008	Aut. 2008	Jan.-Feb. 2009	Sp. 2009	Aut. 2009	Sp. 2010	Aut. 2010	Sp. 2011	Aut. 2011	Sp. 2012	Aut. 2012	Sp. 2013
EB62	EB63	EB64	EB65	EB66	EB67	EB68	EB69	EB70	EB71.1	EB71	EB72	EB73	EB74	EB75	EB76	EB77	EB78	EB79

Characteristics large scale violence

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- Riots will occur from time to time
- Less well organised, bottom up (contrary to 1930's)
- New social media speed up processes of organisation
- New themes, less focussed on national politics
- Mode of policing can be important source of unrest

How to react?

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Old lessons (Kerner commission 1967):

Protesting masses are heterogeneous, small groups create riot, reaction of police/government does have impact on the outcome

New lessons:

- Communication is more important and more difficult
- Police should care about image and react more flexible

Forget Max Weber and Egon Bittner

« waakzaam en dienstbaar »