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INSTITUTE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

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Policing Minority Communities: International Perspectives

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Immigrants and the Police

- Less trust in police
- Less cooperation with police
 - less crime reporting
 - less forthcoming with information about the community
- Less aware of rights and opportunities
- More often stopped by police
- Report more discrimination and disrespect from police
- More uncertain about their place in the host society

But there are exceptions to all of these research findings
The exceptions are important!

“Immigrants” is a very general and unsatisfactory category

- Great variation between groups of Immigrants
- Immigrants vary greatly even within a host nation

“Host societies” also vary, and respond in different ways

* Trust in police varies by generation and time in country

Finland: longer in the country → less trust in the police

Europe: 2nd generation less trusting than the 1st generation

Why? Time to accumulate victimization, experience with police, encounters with host society and its policies and bureaucracies

* Immigrants vary in their “visibility”

Finland: Russians versus Somalis

Belgium: Polish versus Turks and Moroccans

also signaled by head scarfs, beards, characteristic dress

* Vary in concentration/isolation in the host country

Concentration can lead to

- isolation from the native host population
- concentration of grievances and misunderstandings

Ex: Turks and Moroccans in Belgium

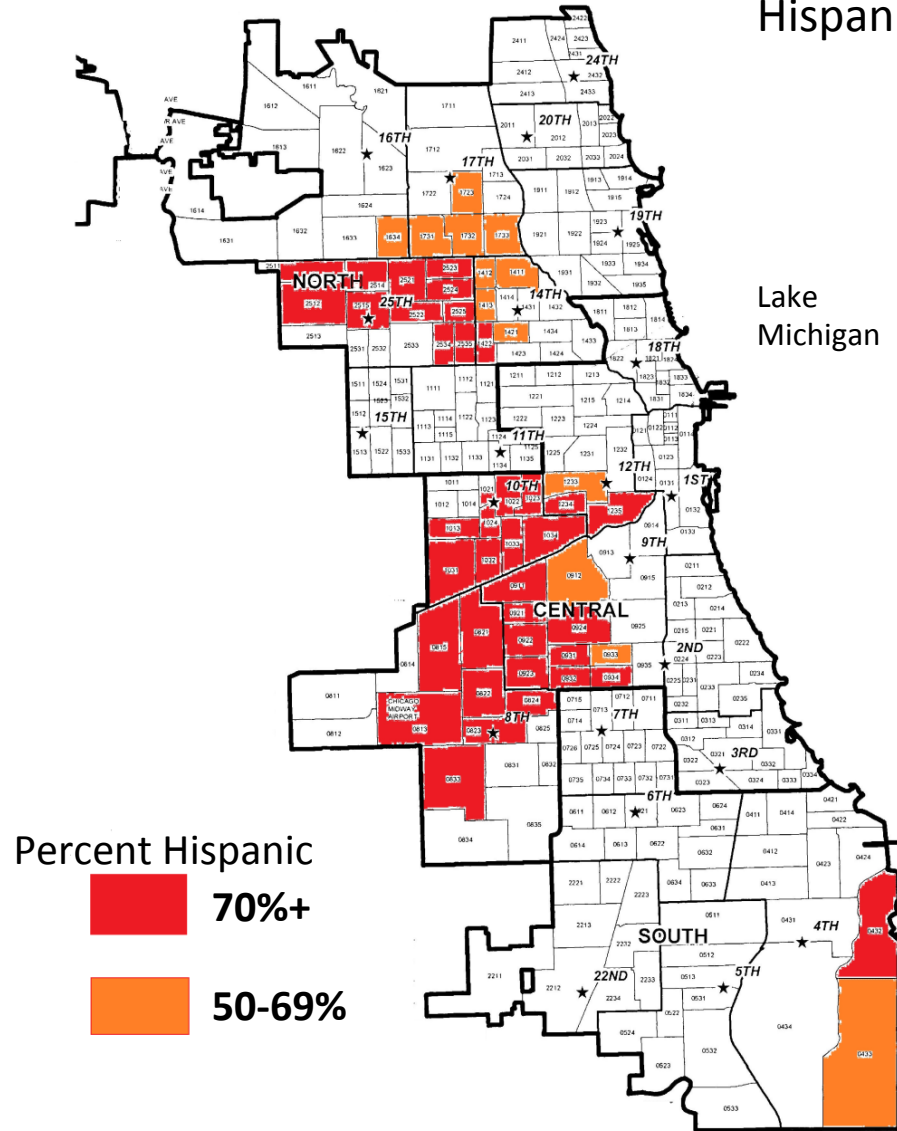
tightly-knit communities → share distrust of police
broader contacts in society → more trust in police
problem: mostly remain in tight-knit enclaves

We know (in general) that personal communication is an important source of attitudes about the police –stories and the experiences of others shape opinion

Concentrated Hispanic Areas of Chicago

Total population 658,000

Hispanic population 497,000



Impact of context: among Hispanics, the greater the concentration

- more distrust of police
- more likely to see police as brutal
- more likely to see as corrupt
- less likely to be involved in community policing

- perceive more social disorder
(public drinking, fights, loitering youths)

- perceive more physical decay
(abandoned cars and buildings, trash)
- report more crime problems

PLUS: this is where the undocumented hide

* Vary in the extent of an undocumented population

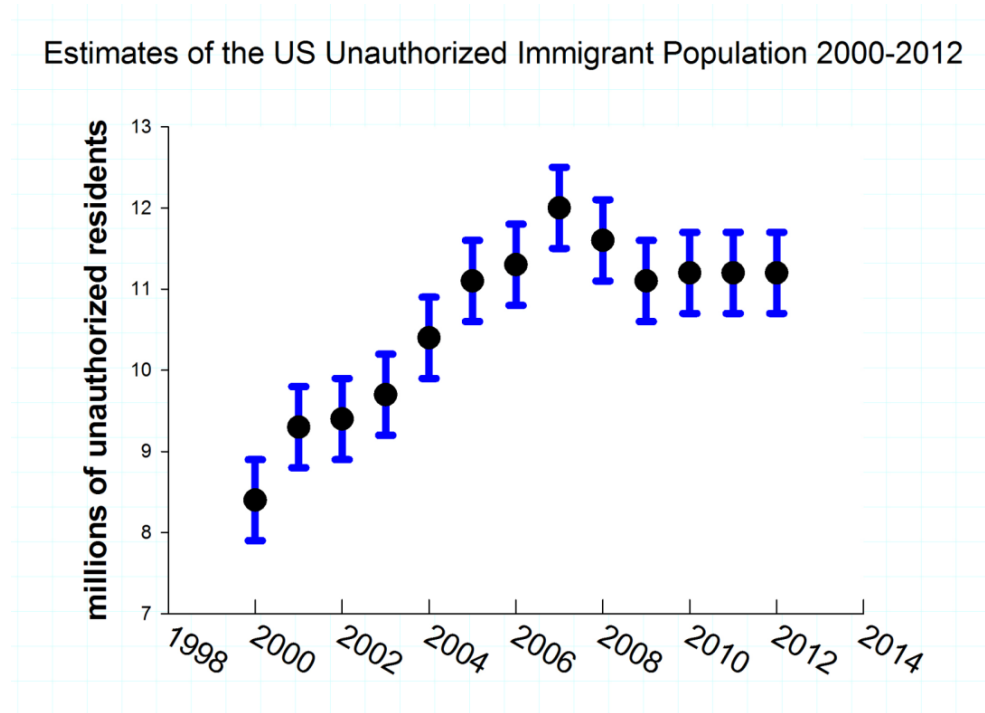
USA 37 million foreign-born residents

30% citizens

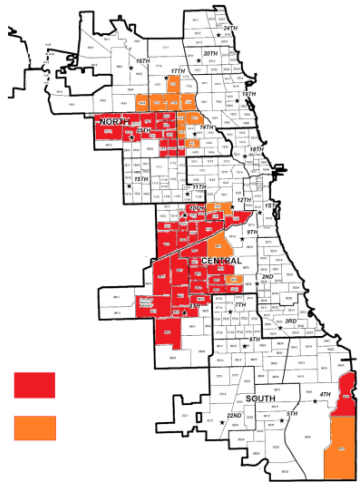
40% registered permanent residents, refugees, students

30% undocumented residents

(about 11.2 million undocumented; down from pre-2007)



* Vary in the extent of an undocumented population



Large undocumented populations affect everything

- avoid contact with the police
- worry about their network, not just themselves (families, friends)
- live, work and hide in concentrated areas
- isolated from larger community
- undeclared work; no services or job security

- police pressured to investigate, enforce immigration laws
- can lead to excessive stops, identity checks, undue suspicion
- encourages “sweeps” and other large-scale crack-downs



Contributes to the nasty politics of immigration policy

* Vary in whether perceived as a terror threat

USA: mostly from Mexico and Central America

France, UK: large poor Muslim communities

Anti-terror policing is different

develop and use informants from the community

extensive surveillance, aim at community and religious leaders

undercover investigations to discover -- not solve – crimes

(success is “nothing happened”)

secret penetration of organizations, religious leaders

many members of the community may share their views, not actions

intrusive, risks over-reaction

* Vary in certainty of their place in society

Police are an important communicator of “group value”

Police signal how valued people are by how they exercise their authority

respect – being polite, talking with people calmly

neutrality – take in all the evidence; do not favor one side

voice – police listen to what they have to say

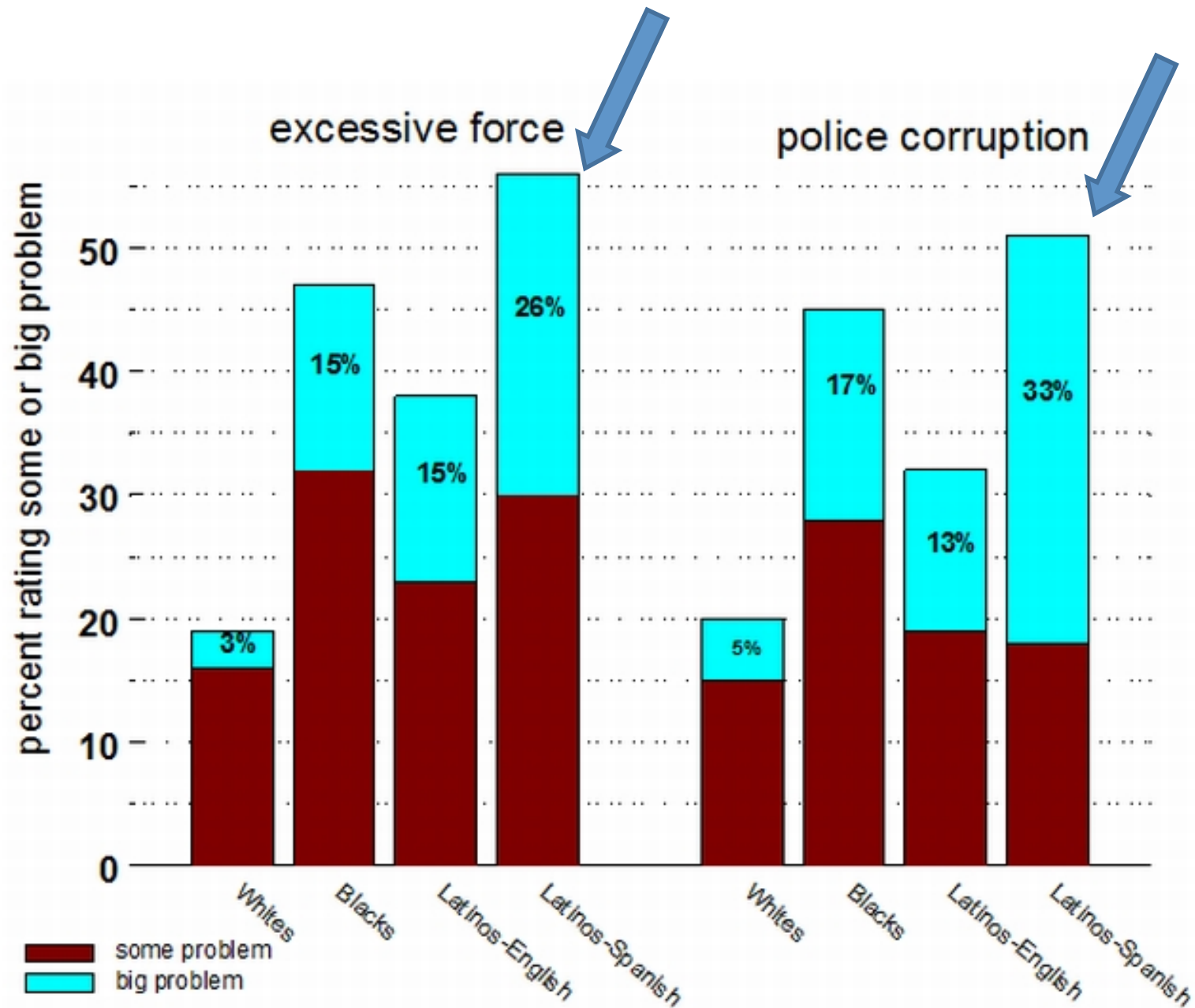
accountability – have understandable reasons for what they do

Affirm status, value to society, extent of marginality and exclusion

- **Immigrants vary in the influence of “cultural overhang”**
(the impact of experiences in their home countries)
 - Sometimes they have come because of the police corrupt, repressive, abusive, violent, incompetent
 - Will be apprehensive about police contacts of all kinds

Australia: research has shown this impact among Sudanese, Arabs and Vietnamese

Cultural Overhang? Hispanic Immigrants in Chicago



- **Trust in police linked to larger social & institutional forces**

- Inequality
- Social insecurity: extent of services and welfare
- Experiences with other bureaucracies; general trust in public administration
(example: Poles in Belgium)
- Treatment by society as a whole (another signal of group value)
- Extent of victimization, fear and disorder (like everyone else)

These limit the impact of measures taken only by the police to improve their relationship with the community

What is to be done?

Community-Oriented Policing

Civic engagement

- Involve community members in discussion
- Identify community priorities
- Two-way exchange of information
- Decentralization of policing to enable responsiveness

Problems

multiple immigrant communities

language and concentration problems are large

immigration enforcement

anti-terror policing

“Only Women Allowed” in Seattle



Run by an NGO (Refugee Women’s Alliance)

- pairs female officers with immigrant women
- translators for recent immigrants
- focus on domestic and family violence

Larger Goals

- send word back to immigrant communities
- build trust and knowledge among police and immigrants

What is to be done?

Procedural Justice

- Theory about encounters between authorities and subordinates
- This relates to one of the biggest complaints of immigrants

voice: input into decision-making, tell their side of the story

accountability: given reasons or explanations for authorities' actions

respect: treated politely

neutrality: appear to take all the facts into account

trust: believe authorities will act on their behalf in the future

legitimacy: have a duty to obey, feel must defer to authorities

What is to be done?

Procedural Justice

Research on procedural justice has fairly consistent findings

- powerful effect on American Muslims
- no effect on mixed groups of immigrants in Australia
- works among Moroccans and Turks in Belgium
- works among Somali in Finland but not among Russian immigrants


Usually has large effects in comparison to other sources of trust in the police

- performance: effectiveness at crime fighting

What is to be done?

Procedural Justice

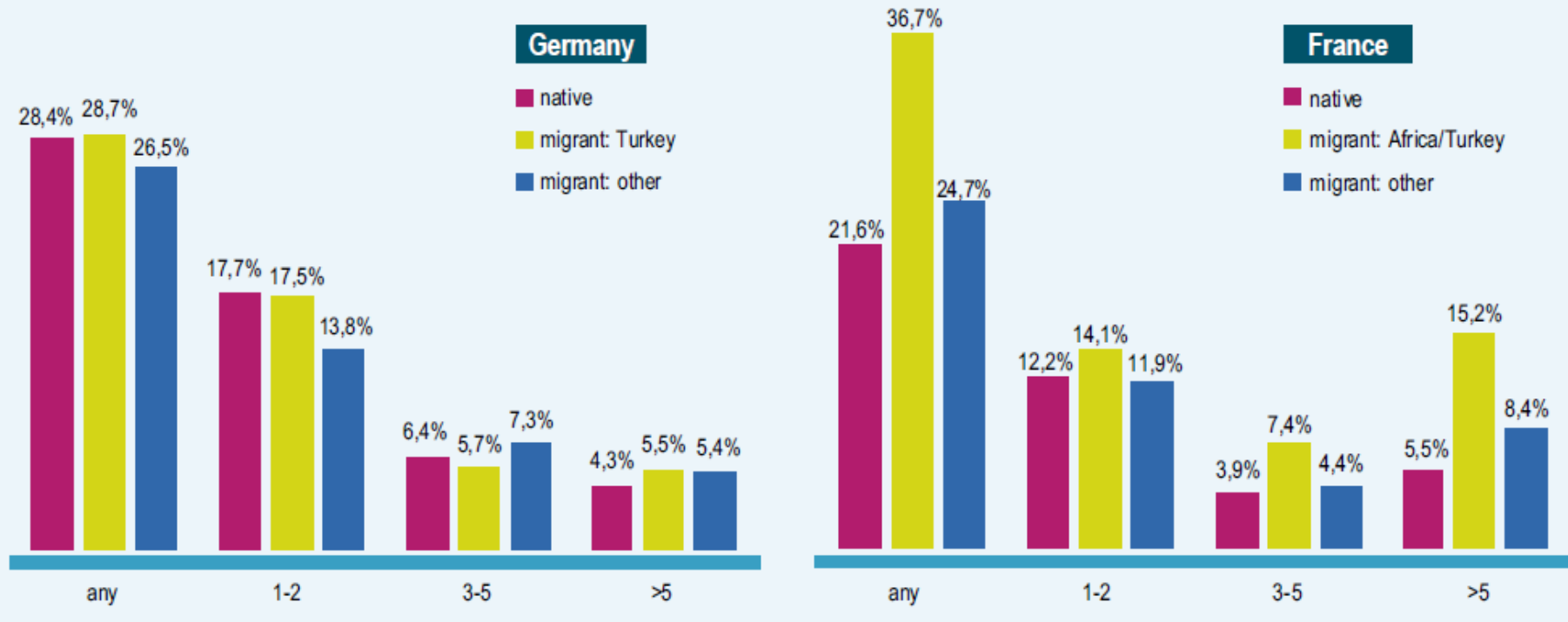
How to get police to do it is a hard problem

- leadership
- supervision
- training 
- discipline

But place-to-place variation in police behavior suggests it can be done

Very large differences in youth reports of how they are treated by police

Figure 2. Frequency of police-initiated contacts (identity checks, traffic controls, last year), boys only



Germany: Cologne & Mannheim

- 250-350 hours of participant observation
- observed 210 police-youth encounters
- in-depth police interviews
- 7,300 school-based youth surveys

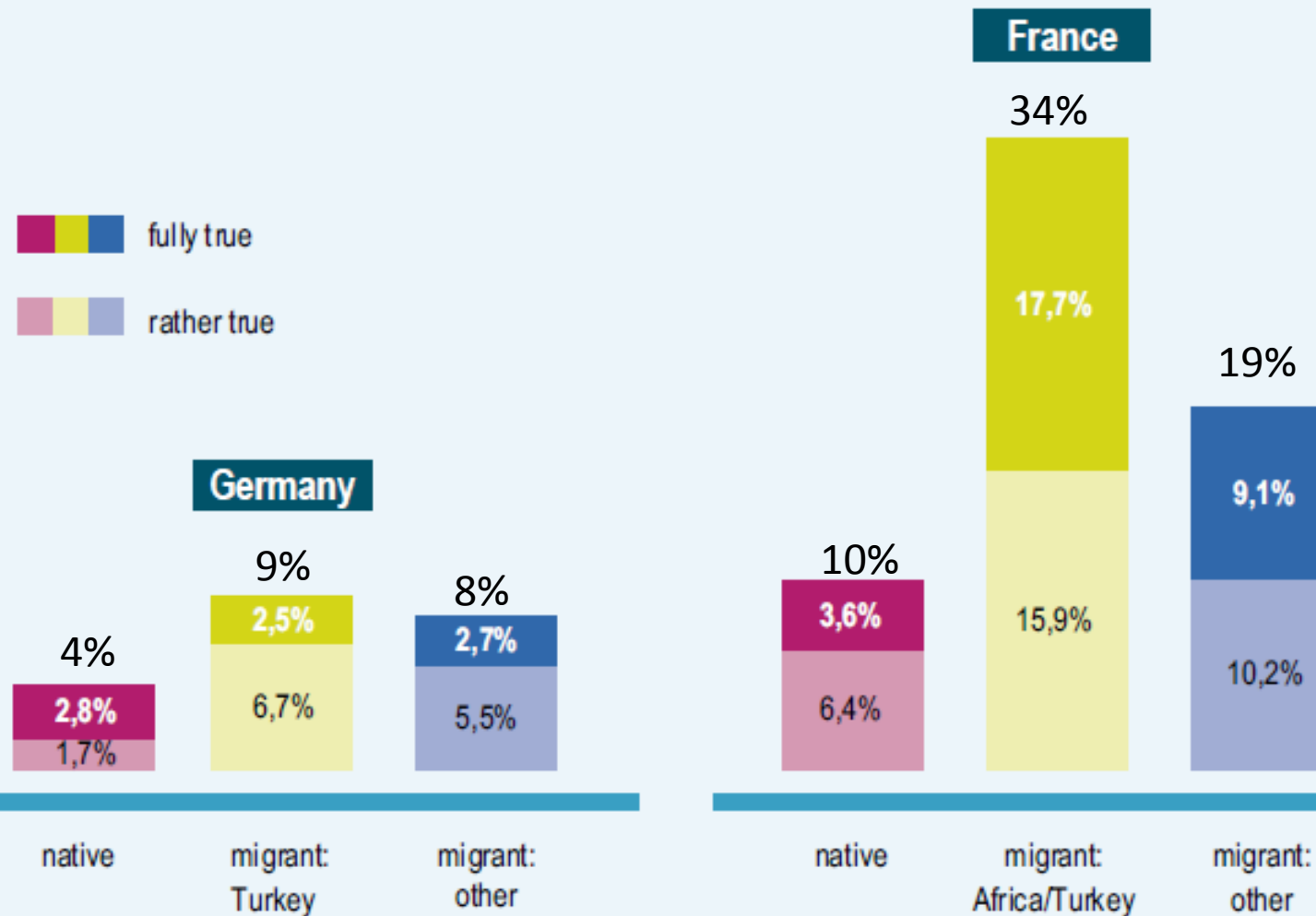
France: Lyon & Grenoble

- 250-350 hours of participant observation
- observed 350 police-youth encounters
- in-depth police interviews
- 13,500 school-based youth surveys

Source: Oberwittler & Roche, 2013.

Very large differences in youth reports of how they are treated by police

Figure 3. "The police became violent" during last contact, boys only



Source: Oberwittler & Roche, 2013.

Summary

Economic threats – competition for jobs, under-employed underclass
Cultural threats - gender, family values, religious identity
Security threats - terrorism



Visibility of immigrant groups
Concentration/isolation of communities
home-country experiences – “cultural overhang”
documented versus undocumented migration

Immigrants

Host society

Immigration policing policies
Anti-terror policing
Moral and political panics



stop and question tactics
surveillance, undercover infiltration, enticement
negative over-time and generational experiences

Researchers to Watch

Kristina Murphy & Adrian Cherney – Australia

Tom Tyler – American Muslims

Maarten Van Craen – Belgium

Juha Kääriäinen - Finland

Dietrich Oberwittler – Germany

Sebastian Roché – France

Sophie Body-Gendrot – France

Badi Hasisi & David Weisburd – Israel

Yael Litmanovitz & Jonahan-Zamir - Israel

Ben Bradford – UK

William McDonald - Transnational

Robert Davis – New York City (40% foreign born)

The CORPOL staff – Germany, Austria, Hungary

