

REPORTING THE RIOTS—Mediated responses to the November 2005 civil unrest in France

Abstract

This paper is an initial, exploratory study into the media coverage of the November 2005 civil unrest in France. Because the media informs public opinion and influences policy responses to events, a thorough media analysis is vital to our understanding of the public's reaction to the riots. This paper compared and contrasted media coverage of this event from within France and Australia in order to examine whether the media's reporting styles and interpretation of the events differed significantly across the two countries. I found that the French media tended to interpret the civil unrest as a response to concerns over youth unemployment, whereas the Australian media treated the riots as evidence of France's failed immigration policy. The reason for this may lie in Australia's concern over its own race relations, which erupted during the Cronulla beach riots on December 11. This research argues for a more nuanced understanding of the concerns of French young people within the international media.