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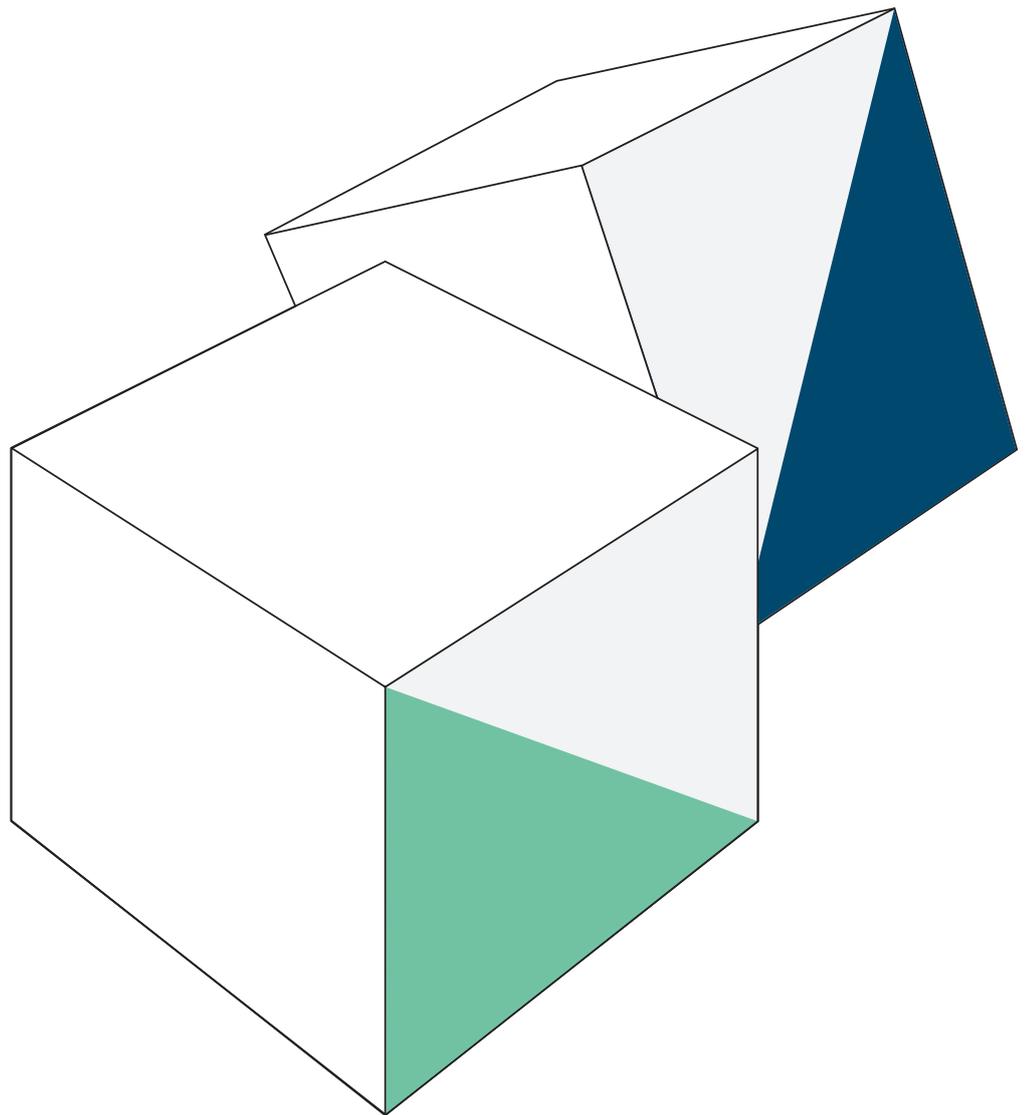
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Urban Order and Rationality: Racially Coded Street Violence, Racial Projects and Practices of Comparing in Chicago 1919

Klaus Weinhauer

Abstracts

This paper elaborates steps towards an approach which can bring about new insights about the racially coded street violence of July/August 1919 and about related problems in Chicago. Three interrelated perspectives are integrated: the social construction of race and racism based on racial projects, the triangular setting (perpetrator-victim-audience/third parties) of social conflict (including race/racism) and violence, and the study of practices of comparing. In 1919 there was a widely shared assumption of similarity ('Gleichartigkeitsannahme') which naturalized the difference between two distinct races ('white' and 'negro'). The racial projects studied in this paper addressed different third parties/audiences. The press was no passive audience but an active third party which communicated the often localized patterns of racism to translocal audiences. The racial projects of the report of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR) were shaped by progressive comparisons which focused on urban-based social-political progress and on advanced masculine rationality. The racial projects in Chicago were massively shaped by practices of comparing which tried to bring order and stability to a society whose white members felt themselves threatened through massive war-induced social change.

Das Arbeitspapier entwickelt erste Schritte für einen Ansatz, der neue Einsichten vermitteln kann über die rassisch kodierte Straßengewalt in Chicago im Juli/August 1919 sowie über damit verbundene Problemfelder. Verknüpft werden drei Perspektiven: die soziale Konstruktion von „race" und Rassismus durch dezentrale „racial projects", das triadische Setting Täter-Opfer-Dritte/Publikum sowie Vergleichspraktiken. 1919 gab es eine weithin geteilte Gleichartigkeitsannahme, durch die Unterschiede zwischen zwei klar unterscheidbaren „Rassen" (Weiße und Schwarze) naturalisiert wurden. Die in vielen Gesellschaftsbereichen verankerten dezentralen „racial projects" adressierten ein weites Spektrum von lokalen bis hin zu translokalen Dritten/Publika. Die Presse, ein wichtiger und aktiver Dritter, kein passives Publikum, kommunizierte und ergänzte die oft lokal begrenzten rassistischen Muster an translokale Publika. Die im Bericht der Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR) formulierten „racial projects" nutzten progressive Vergleiche, ausgerichtet auf urban geprägten sozialen und politischen Fortschritt sowie auf fortschrittliche männliche Rationalität. Die „racial projects" in Chicago waren untrennbar verbunden mit Vergleichspraktiken. Letztere sollten Ordnung und Stabilität in eine weiße städtische Gesellschaft bringen, die sich bedroht fühlte durch weltkriegsinduzierten sozialen Wandel.

1. Introduction

After World War One a wave of social upheavals shook the world. Cities in Russia, the US, South America, India, the UK, and Germany became hotbeds of strikes, and other forms of collective action which massively fostered social change but also aroused widespread social fears. While the activities of organizations like political parties and trade unions parliamentary politics are well-analyzed, we still lack studies which focus on what happened outside these formal organizations.[1] In such a perspective street-based collective actions and social movements come into view. In order to analyze social change, a focus on cities as the main sites of collective action is an important starting point.[2] We have at least some publications on European capitals which address such issues. In the USA social fears about instability and social change (through a vaguely defined bolshevism, a revolution or political enemies) massively spread. As we will see, these fears could also be racially coded. There are, however, only a few studies on US-cities, which immediately after World War One went through a highly turbulent phase framed by big strikes and other social movement activities.

Chicago is the big US-city which is extremely well-suited to be the focus of such a study. The windy city already had a reputation as a dynamic hotbed of social change, as a city of vice and working-class radicalism. It not only saw numerous strikes in the years immediately following World War One. What makes Chicago the ideal city to focus on, however, is that here many massively violent street actions occurred, some of them racially coded, which gained nationwide attention. These confrontations escalated to

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[1] See Robert Gerwarth/John Horne (eds.), War in Peace. Paramilitary violence in Europe after the Great War, Oxford 2013; Klaus Weinhauer/Anthony McElligott/Kirsten Heinsohn (eds.), Germany 1916-23. A revolution in context, Bielefeld 2015; Stefan Rinke/Michael Wildt (eds.), Revolutions and Counter-Revolutions. 1917 and its aftermath from a global perspective, Frankfurt and New York 2017; James E. Cronin/Carmen Sirianni (eds.), Work, Community and Power. The experience of labor in Europe and America, 1900–1925, Philadelphia 1983; Leopold Haimson/Charles Tilly (eds.), Strikes, Wars, and Revolutions in an International Perspective. Strike waves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Cambridge et al. 1989.

[2] See Tyler Stovall, Paris and the Spirit of 1919. Consumer struggles, transnationalism, and revolution, Cambridge et al. 2012; Michael Goebel, Anti-Imperialist Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the seeds of Third World nationalism, Cambridge et al. 2015.

violent street battles of an unprecedented scale which were initiated by whites and directed against African-Americans.[3] These racially coded violent street actions in summer 1919 added massively to the city's rough image. Through the activities of members of the Chicago school of sociology there are many high-quality contemporary publications which can be used as sources. Moreover, many historians have studied the racially coded street violence that happened in Chicago in July/August 1919.

The publications on the violent confrontations of summer 1919, their aftermath and related social problems share two blind spots - one is related to the construction of race and racism, the other to the conceptualization of social conflict and violence. Most studies on collective action in Chicago in 1919 take race and racial tensions more or less as given facts. Until today the violent collective actions on the streets of Chicago in summer 1919 are labelled as a "race riot", following a terminology established by US newspapers in the early 1880s.[4] This lack of reflection on the concept of race is astonishing, as research on race and racism is flourishing not only in history (urban and labor history) but also in the social sciences.

One of the most promising concepts for the study of race and racism has been elaborated by Michael Omi and Howard Winant. As they have convincingly argued, in a process they call "racialization" racial phenotypes such as "black and white have been constructed and encoded through the language of race".[5] This focus on the social construction of race is in line with most recent studies which see race as a "relationship, and not

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[3] The state of research is summarized by: David Bates, The Ordeal of the Jungle. Race and the Chicago Federation of Labor 1903-1922, Carbondale 2019; David F. Krugler, 1919. The year of racial violence, New York 2015; Christopher Robert Reed, Knock at the Door of Opportunity. Black Migration to Chicago, 1909-1919, Carbondale 2014; Christopher Lamberti, Riot Zone: Chicago 1919, Ph D dissertation Brown University 2013 (MS); Rick Halpern, Down on the Killing Floor. Black and white workers in Chicago's packinghouses, 1904-54, Urbana and Chicago 1997; William M. Tuttle jr., Race Riot. Chicago in the Red Summer of 1919, Urbana and Chicago 1970. See on the important context of prohibition Thomas Welskopp, Amerikas große Ernücherung. Eine Kulturgeschichte der Prohibition, Paderborn 2010.

[4] Michael Banton, In Defence of Mainstream Sociology, in: Ethnic and Racial Studies 36 (2013), pp. 1000-1004, p. 1002. See for critical discussion of the term "race riot" Janet L. Abu-Lughod, Race, Space, and Riots in Chicago, New York, and Los Angeles, Oxford 2007, p. 11f. As the analytical capacity of the term "race riot" is very limited, I will only refer to it when I look at contemporary self -descriptions. For analytical purposes I will use the term racially coded street violence.

[5] Michael Omi/Howard Winant, Racial Formation in the United States, New York 2014, p. 13 and 111. The authors also underline that there is "a crucial corporeal dimension to the race-concept. Race is ocular in an irreducible way" (p. 13).

a thing".[6] Three elements make the book of Omi/Winant especially important for the argument of this article. First, they see race as a concept which is instrumental in shaping social conflict. Such a racialized social conflict is based on the construction of different types of human bodies.[7] As they underline, this conflictual construction of the concept of race rests on an application of seemingly biologically based human characteristics (phenotypes). These features are selected for racial signification. Second, they thoughtfully stress that race as a marker of difference has permeated all forms of social relations in the US and in its recent history.[8] Third, they focus on racial formation. This is a process by which racial identities are created, lived and changed.[9] The key social and cultural process which explains how racial formation works are "racial projects". A racial project is simultaneously an "interpretation, representation, or explanation of racial dynamics, and an effort to reorganize and redistribute resources (….) along particular racial lines". Racial projects connect what is meant by race in discursive practices and the ways in which society (from its organizations to everyday experiences) is racially organized, based upon that meaning.[10] Through these decentralized, dynamic and overlapping "racial projects" racial meaning becomes embedded in institutions and organizations which, in turn, influence the social and cultural understanding of race.[11] This implicates that there is no monolithic racial project, but "a dense matrix" of racial projects in society.[12] A racial project can be defined as racist if it creates or reproduces patterns of domination based on racial categories.

Seeing the construction of race and racism as issues deeply embedded in social conflict is an important clarification which has far-reaching consequences. This leads to the second blind spot in the literature on Chicago 1919. In order to better understand what went on in the racially coded violence in the streets of Chicago in summer 1919 it is

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[6] Laura Tabili, Race is a Relationship, and not a thing, in: Journal of Social History 37,1 (2003), pp. 125-130.
[7] Omi/Winant, Racial Formation 2014, p. 110.
[8] Omi/Winant, Racial Formation 2014, p. 107.
[9] Omi/Winant, Racial Formation 2014, p. 109.
[10] Omi/Winant; Racial Formation 2014, p. 125.
[11] Omi/Winant, Racial Formation 2014, p. 14.
[12] Omi/Winant, Racial Formation 2014, p. 128.

challenging to employ an innovative understanding of conflict which has only been recently elaborated. This perspective was put forward by the author of this article and by other members of the Bielefeld Collaborative Research Center (SFB 1288 Praktiken des Vergleichens. Die Welt ordnen und verändern / Practices of Comparing. Ordering and Changing the World), established 2017.[13] This interpretation includes two methodological innovations. On the one hand, an understanding of conflict is employed which puts the triadic relationship between perpetrator-victim-third party/audience center stage. For the construction of race understood as social conflict such a triadic interaction involves a) the person or institution which labels another person as inferior, b) the target person of this labelling process and c) the third party or audience, be it physically present (bystanders) or not. Moreover, in this approach physical violence is seen as a pattern of communication which also should be analyzed in the triangle between perpetrator-victim-third party/audience. As we still lack studies which help to elaborate differentiations regarding the third party/audience. [14]

On the other hand, it should be an academic common place that race is put into effect through innumerable recurring practices in which comparing is omnipresent. In a nutshell: One cannot talk about race and racism without doing comparisons. The latter can create order but can also set dynamics in motion which can lead to new patterns of order. Omi/Winant, however, do not pay any attention to (practices of) comparing. From practice theoretical perspective, routines, repetitions, symbols and so on are instrumental in this process of ordering and re-ordering.[15] When we consider that race and racism could also be understood as efforts to create order, the years immediately

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[13] See Klaus Weinhauer/Dagmar Ellerbrock, Perspektiven auf Gewalt in europäischen Städten seit dem 19. Jahrhundert, in: Informationen zur modernen Stadtgeschichte 2/2013, pp. 5-20; Mathias Albert et al., Vergleichen unter den Bedingungen von Konflikt und Konkurrenz. Praktiken des Vergleichens. Working Paper SFB 1288, No. 1, Bielefeld 2019. See for related thoughts on the role of the category "race" in the concept of the SFB 1288 Ulrike Davy et al., Grundbegriffe für eine Theorie des Vergleichens. Ein Zwischenbericht. Praktiken des Vergleichens. Working Paper SFB 1288, No. 3. Bielefeld 2019, pp. 11-13.
[14] Albert et al., Vergleichen 2019, p. 33.
[15] See for an outline of this approach of the SFB 1288: Angelika Epple/Walter Erhard, Die Welt beobachten – Praktiken des Vergleichens, in: Angelika Epple/Walter Erhard (eds.), Die Welt beobachten. Praktiken des Vergleichens, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2015, pp. 7-31, p. 18; and for a challenging practice theoretical approach Angelika Epple, Calling for a practice turn in global history. Practices as drivers of globalization/s, in: History and Theory 57 (2018), pp. 390-407.

following World War One gain special importance. As was mentioned above, this phase was shaped by intense sometimes racially coded fears of instability and of social change. In this setting in Chicago a quest for a stable urban order was widespread.

In this brief paper it is certainly impossible to outline the history or the main findings of the broad field of research on race, on practice theory or on comparing. My main aim is to demonstrate which new insights can be gained about the racially coded street violence of July and August of 1919 and about related problems, if we employ three inter-related perspectives, which address the social construction of race and racism based on racial projects (1), the triangular setting (perpetrator-victim-audience/third parties) of social conflict (including race/racism) and violence, and the study of practices of comparing (3).

After a brief sketch of Chicago's economy, its housing problems and the racially coded street violence of summer 1919 (chapter 2) I will scrutinize racial projects in relevant arenas like housing, urban life, labor relations (chapter 3). The Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR) established in late 1919 will be analyzed in a longer chapter (chapter 4), as it was a highly important player in the field of race relations which elaborated suggestions to avoid the recurrence of violent confrontations between whites and African-Americans. Due to the high relevancy race and racism had in Chicago in 1919 and due to the big gaps in related research more space will be devoted to the analysis of racial projects than to the study of (practices of) comparing.

2. Chicago: Economy, housing, racially coded street violence

Chicago's economy was shaped by mass production industries (meat, iron and steel, railroad), dominated by big companies like Pullman (railroad), Armour and Swift (stockyards), and US Steel. It was especially in meatpacking and in the stockyards where during the First World War the number of African Americans employees grew strongly. In some meatpacking plants, 60-70 percent of the workforce were African Americans. Chicago's African American population more than doubled between 1910

and 1920, when the federal census counted roughly 110,000 African American inhabitants.[16] Some 90 percent of them lived in the Black Belt of South Side Chicago, where between 1910 and 1920 the number of African American inhabitants nearly tripled.

From 27 July to 2 August 1919 a series of events of racially coded street violence shook the city.[17] These confrontations left 38 people dead (among them 14 whites), 547 injured (342 African Americans and 205 whites), and more than thousand homeless. The key incident was the drowning of an African American boy whose raft had drifted over an imagined dividing line into a beach section of whites. In the neighborhood where most African Americans lived, the "Black Belt", rumors spread that the boy had been held under water by whites. The violence escalated until the next day. Bricks, stones and other missiles were thrown, and guns were fired.[18] By Wednesday, July 30, the "riot" had quieted significantly. Violence was further minimized by the arrival of state militia. By Thursday morning, Governor Frank Lowden declared the situation to be under control.

During the racially coded confrontations, whites went into African-American neighborhoods, mostly armed with bricks, stones, baseball bats, iron bars, hammers, but also with guns. African Americans defended themselves with firearms and knives.[19] Groups of whites drove into African-American neighborhoods with cars firing randomly at houses, windows, and African-American passers-by.[20] The greatest number of injuries occurred west of Wentworth Avenue in the Stockyard district, followed by the Black Belt district[21]. Main thoroughfares witnessed 76 per cent of the injuries on the South

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[16] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 76.
[17] See as a still very good overview Tuttle, Race Riot 1970; and as the relevant source Chicago Commission on Race Relation, The Negro in Chicago. A study in race relations and a race riot, Chicago 1922.
[18] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, S. 175; CCRR Report 1922, p. 536.
[19] Tuttle, Race riot 1970, p. 34.
[20] CCRR Report 1922, p. 598. For the micro structure of the violence see CCRR Report 1922, pp. 48-50.
[21] CCRR Report 1922, p. 48f.

Side, where transfer corners "were always centers of trouble".[22] During the "riot" African Americans fought back and showed "a growing race solidarity"[23] but also a "deepened bitterness of race feeling".[24]

Racially coded violence in Chicago did not only erupt as late as summer 1919. There was a series of open clashes between whites and African Americans which started in early 1917.[25] Some of them were confrontations between groups of whites and African Americans but there were bombings against homes of African Americans and against real estate agents who had business with them as well. Seven bombings had happened in the six weeks preceding the "riot".[26] The bombings and the low profile the police kept in countering this violence, intensified the lack of trust African Americans had towards the police and supported their impulses for armed self-defense.

3. Racial Projects in Chicago 1919

3.1 Housing and urban life

From 1916 to 1919 some 50,000 African Americans migrated to Chicago, mostly from southern regions. The war had accelerated a long-term process of migration from the South to northern US cities. In Chicago the migration confronted rural workers who mostly had worked in agriculture with a double challenge: Living in a big city and working as a proletarian in highly industrialized branches. As nearly no houses had been built in wartime Chicago, migration contributed to a shortage of housing opportunities.

In Chicago in 1919 social fears about change were the main element of the racial project which drove the racially coded social conflicts about housing in the cities' white neighborhoods. These fears, which were present in individual actions and also shaped the activities of social organizations, were focused on three aspects.[27] Generally white in-

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[22] CCRR Report 1922, p. 49.
[23] CCRR Report 1922, p. 46.
[24] CCRR Report 1922, p. 46.
[25] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 53-57.
[26] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p.182.
[27] See for the following CCRR Report 1922, pp. 194-224.

habitants were terrified by the imagination that African Americans might buy residential property in their area. Moreover, white inhabitants feared the erosion of racial homogeneity in their neighborhood. Additionally, whites were convinced that the growing presence of African Americans who bought houses in white neighborhoods would inevitably lead to a massive loss in property value (depreciation) in these areas.

These social fears whites articulated were often abstract imaginaries which did not need concrete physical encounters with African Americans. In this abstraction the temporal comparison between a racial homogeneity before and after African Americans had moved into formerly all-white neighborhoods might be seen as a special case of comparing, that means it is more an analogy comparing a structural quality of the neighborhood (its racial homogeneity).[28] This analogy consisted of the comparata whites versus African Americans and the tertia was the abstract quality of life in the neighborhood. Additionally, through comparing property values whites tried to create a seemingly objective argument to ban African Americans from their neighborhood. This was also an effort to create order and to stop local social change in a seemingly ever-changing urban setting.[29]

The social organizations which helped to formulate and to put these comparisons into social action were homeowner associations. These organizations which tried to fight the presence of African Americans contributed strongly to establish the racialized narratives about depreciation. Initially these fears were communicated mainly on meetings of local homeowners. This local audience, the third party in this process of communication in a racially coded social conflict, was widened when, as mentioned above, bombs exploded which were targeted at African American residences in formerly all-white neighborhoods and at offices of realtors who had cooperated with African Americans.[30] These bombings were picked-up widely by the white and African American press in Chicago.

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[28] See on analogies Davy et al., Grundbegriffe 2019, pp. 31-36.

[29] As research has demonstrated there were many more factors that influenced property value (local housing policy, the quality of public transport, the moving in and out of industries, the physical deterioration of old buildings). See CCRR Report 1922, pp. 194-214; St. Clair Drake/Horace C. Cayton, Black Metropolis. A study of negro life in a northern city, New York 1945; Arnold R. Hirsch, Making the Second Ghetto. Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960, Cambridge etc. 1983.

[30] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 159 and p. 250.

The press was no passive audience. The newspapers were an active third party which helped to create translocal audiences and also formulated their own interpretations of racism.

As a thorough analysis of the newspaper coverage which was related to African Americans in 1919 Chicago indicated: Most of the published information "concerning the Negro (sic!) and issues related to him (sic!) magnifies his crimes and mistakes beyond all reasonable proportions (….). Crimes, riots, intermarriage, lynchings, and radicalism were the subjects of articles, which in their repetition … presented a disproportionately unfavorable aspect of the Negro population".[31] Many newspapers in 1919/20 "play(ed) upon racial fears" thus increasing the racially coded social tensions. Chicago newspapers were also quick to turn public encounters where whites and African Americans yelled at each other or fist fights between them into riots incited be African Americans.[32]

The racial project which shaped racism in the field of housing was centered on often abstract social fears about the erosion of racial homogeneity (supported through seemingly objectified arguments about depreciation). In social micro settings (public space, public transport, in bars and restaurants) the more concrete encounters and interactions were differently racialized. In restaurants and bars the discriminatory racial project was put into effect by waiters and shop managers, and the third party was a highly localized audience present in these locations. When African Americans wanted to dine in restaurants which saw themselves as an all-white location, a wide range of strategies were employed: the non-white guests were not admitted, service was massively delayed, or food was spoilt. Moreover, when African Americans were admitted to dine, screens were put around the tables where they ate.[33] In these micro settings where there was physical contact between whites and African Americans the racial project was shaped by implicit comparisons which tried to uphold racial homogeneity. This was supported by trying to make African American guests invisible by putting micro fences around them and thus putting an optical segregation into practice.

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[31] CCCR Report 1922, p. 531f. See for details of the press coverage of the bombings ibid., p. 532-537.
[32] See CCCR 1922, p. 542.
[33] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 312-316.

Public transport in Chicago had no separation of seats. Before the First World War African Americans were mostly employed on personal service, jobs for which they only very seldom needed to use public transport. The thousands of African Americans who came from the South in the context of war induced migration, however, lived in neighborhoods situated far away from their workplace in, for example, the stockyards. Thus, they had to make intensive use of public transportation. Many whites had only very few contacts with African Americans, but public transport was the exception from that rule. Mainly in crowded street cars the racially coded bodies came into close physical contact. As these contacts were not supervised, as for example in schools, confrontational situations could easily escalate and observations of the alleged behavior of African Americans or of whites could have lasting impacts on individual memory.[34] The complaints raised by white customers, mostly from middle class members and clerical workers,[35] were mainly about ill-smelling African Americans or about the loud conversations of the latter or their lack of body control. Similar to the case of restaurants and bars, these racist interactions in the face of even closer physical contact were driven by fears of an unspecified contagion. These white customers also wanted to make African Americans invisible.

Another racial project was put into practice on the streets of the neighborhoods which were adjacent to the Black Belt, the part of the city where most of the African Americans lived at that time. Wentworth Avenue was a highly contested demarcation line. It marked the eastern boundary of the mostly Irish catholic and the western boundary of the protestant Black Belt neighborhood.[36] African Americans had to walk through these precincts on the way to their workplaces. Key players in this racial project were streetgangs or athletic clubs, which often were closely related to Democratic politicians. The implicit comparisons in these cases of physical contact and sometimes even physical confrontations made by these gangs and clubs, which should better be understood as

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[34] CCRR Report 1922, p. 619.
[35] CCRR Report 1922, p. 621.
[36] See Lamberti, Riot Zone 2013, pp. 134-140; CCRR Report 1922, pp. 7-13.

social movements,[37] were centered on an imaginary of an all-white local urban territory of mostly Catholic Irish and Polish inhabitants.[38] Their way to put these comparisons into action included not only verbal intimidation but massive physical violence as well. This was a confrontation mainly shaped by working-class racism, where proletarians fought about local urban order against proletarians.

At stake in these physical confrontations were not mainly work-related issues. These fights were about leisure and consumption in public space like the use of public meeting places, recreational facilities, cinemas, and bars. This underlines that in these urban neighborhoods not only housing was a racially contested terrain. Rather, many aspects of urban space were deeply racially coded, as the gangs and clubs saw themselves as the defenders of gendered and racially coded urban spatial micro order. In these racist confrontations with African Americans the gangs and clubs could also document that they were white and were locally rooted and not uprooted migrants coming from the south. Thus, through these violent conflicts the ethnic Irish and Polish inhabitants could publicly create their "wages of whiteness"[39]. Through this they publicly demonstrated: We are white and we are allowed to punish all non-white intruders. The audiences to which these racialized confrontations were communicated were the white citizens of the local neighborhood. The sympathies of this supportive local third party/audience given - be it physically present or imagined - made it possible for the white collectives to self-consciously and mercilessly drive their African American enemies out of their turf.

3.2 Labor relations: labor market, shop-floor, unions

Chicago's employers already tried to bring more African American workers into the stockyards before the war.[40] For this purpose they used their links with the two most

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[37] This interpretation is put forward by Klaus Weinhauer, World War I and Urban Societies: Social movements, fears, and spatial order in Hamburg and Chicago (c. 1916-23), in: Rinke/Wildt (eds.), Revolutions 2017, pp. 287-306, p. 302f.
[38] Lamberti, Riot Zone 2013, chapter 2.
[39] David Roediger, The Wages of Whiteness. Race and the making of the American working class, London 1991.
[40] Halpern, Killing Floor 1997, p. 59.

important African American civil society organizations, the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and the Urban League. At numerous opportunities, employers had used African American workers to undermine strikes in the stockyard and meatpacking houses (1894, 1904) of white workers. The war, however, challenged these established patterns of segregation. On the one hand, the war increased the demand for meat in order to feed the soldiers. On the other hand, immigration from Europe between 1914 and 1918 dropped by 80 percent. Together with domestic conscription this created a severe labor shortage. Third, in this setting the migration of African American workers from the south, as indicated above, brought new workers but also new challenges to the loyalties towards skill, ethnicity and race.

It would be wrong to speak of only one racial project in labor relations. Until now this has not been sufficiently recognized by most labor history studies. If we look at the stockyards and meat packinghouses, among the biggest employers in Chicago, the racial projects shaping the labor relations of this industry had a highly complex network of hierarchically structured players and third parties/audiences, as the workforce was divided by skill, ethnicity and race.[41] While the comparata workers used in their implicit comparisons were white workers on the one side and African American workers on the other, they used a variety of tertia, which were very often focused on work discipline and productivity. Workplace based racism against African American workers was expressed through several derogatory categories. White workers deemed African Americans as undisciplined, and as lacking output-oriented work ethics. They also put their experience as urban workers against the rural origins of those African Americans recently migrated to Chicago from the South. The third party/audience was also highly fragmented. Racism could stay confined to workgroups in what David Montgomery referred to as 'the foreman's empire'[42] at the shop floor but could also diffuse beyond the factory or workplace, into union meetings and neighborhoods. In these settings the

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[41] Halpern, Killing Floor 1997, pp.44-48.
[42] David Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor. The workplace, the state, and American labor activism, 1865-1925, Cambridge 1989, p. 115.

work-related racism could mix with racist communications of the racial projects of other social arenas.

In confrontations between whites and African Americans on the shop floor, knives and revolvers were used. Thus, as the key study underlined, the "riot" of 1919 was also a "violent outcrop of the long-standing discord between white and black job competitors.[43] During the "riot" itself there were only very few violent confrontations in the stockyards where the highest number of African Americans were employed. As a closer look indicates, however, the absence of violence in this case was due to the fact, that only very few African Americans had made it to their jobs, as it was nearly impossible to reach them by walking through hostile white neighborhoods.[44]

All in all, in the Chicago labor movement, "racism was the norm, not the exception".[45] A week before the racially coded street violence in summer 1919, ten thousand stockyard workers walked off their jobs in order to protest against the presence of non-unionized African Americans.[46] In the stockyards of summer 1919 the unwillingness among African Americans to join a union was very present. This was especially true for those who had recently migrated to Chicago. While in 1919 nearly 90 per cent of the Northern-born African Americans stockyard workers were unionized, only very few of the big numbers of recent migrants from the South were.[47] After the "riot" and in face of economic depression the shop floor violence between white and African American workers escalated.[48] At that critical time phase "white workers increasingly viewed non-union black workers as a dire economic, social, and even physical threat".[49] African Americans did not want to jeopardize their new jobs by joining a union. White workers also viewed African Americans as strike breakers and thus willing tools of the employers. The racial projects in labor relations were centered, among others, around skill, ethnicity, work discipline, and productivity. In this context, union membership pitted

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[43] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 109.
[44] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 110.
[45] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 145.
[46] Halpern, Killing Floor 1997, p. 62; Bates, Jungle 2019, p.116.
[47] Tuttle, Race Riot 1970, p. 147.
[48] Bates, Jungle 2019, p.117f.
[49] Bates, Jungle 2019, p. 117.

workers against each other, thus blurring the tensions between workers on the one side and employers and their staff on the other. The field of labor relations was so complex a setting of racial formation that it is hard to generalize which racial project was dominant.

4. The Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR): Racial projects and practices of comparing

Given the complex set of interacting and overlapping racial projects in Chicago, it is interesting to ask which proposals were elaborated to avoid further violent escalations after the summer of 1919. The main focus of this chapter will be on the committee which was put together to study the causes of the Chicago "race riot" of July and August 1919. The first meeting of this Chicago Commission on Race Relations (CCRR) was held October 9, 1919; its report was published in September 1922. The main initiative came from a meeting of representatives of social organizations on August 1, 1919. On August 20, Governor Frank O. Lowden announced the appointment of such a body with white and African American members. CCRR put together a "pioneering sociological analysis".[50] It followed the impulses given by the at that time (1899) path-breaking publication of W.E.B. Du Bois.[51] This close relationship also becomes obvious if we look at the title of the report of the Commission, "The Negro in Chicago". Du Bois' study was titled "The Philadelphia Negro".[52] The CCRR studied the living and working conditions of African Americans in Chicago, analyzed existing data while also new source materials were collected, hearings were organized and field work research was carried out. Six sub-committees were organized which focused on "Racial Clashes", "Racial Contacts", Housing, Industry, Crime, and Public Opinion.[53]

One should not forget, that the Commission was also a player in the field of racialized social relations in Chicago. With its numerous hearings, interviews, and press reports it

[50] Paul M. Bulmer, Charles S. Johnson, Robert E. Park and the research methods of the Chicago Commission on Race Relations 1919-22: An early experiment in applied social research, in: Ethnic and Racial Studies 4 (1981), pp. 289-306, p. 289.
[51] W.E.B. Du Bois, The Philadelphia Negro. A social study, Philadelphia, Pa. 1899.
[52] Ibid.
[53] CCRR Report 1922, p. XVII.

added to the existing racial projects and it did that by communicating to regional or even national third parties/audiences, which included academic third parties/audiences. As indicated in the first section of this article, a racial project simultaneously interprets what is meant by race and (re-)organizes social resources along racial divisions and, as a consequence, racial meaning becomes embedded in institutions, organizations and in every day routines. All this in turn, influences the social and cultural understanding of race.

The personnel structure of the Commission underlined that there were two races, as its staff was explicitly subdivided into white and into African American members. Thus the "state put the official stamp on racial difference".[54] With this assumption of similarity (Gleichartigkeitsannahme) that there are two distinct races ('white' and 'negro') these differences were naturalized. Although the report differentiates among the whites between many ethnic groups (Italians, Irish, Poles) and among African Americans between those how lived longer in Chicago and the new migrants from the south, the overall argument speaks of two races.

One leading juror from the jury set up after the clashes of summer 1919 found a pragmatic solution to overcome racial tensions in Chicago through a 'segregation by agreement': As jury member John P. Brushingham put it:

> "Let the leaders of both peoples come together and agree for the general good to dwell apart. Both races will be happier and more prosperous by themselves." In this situation "it might be better for the colored minority to take the initiative and say to their white fellow citizens, grant us no special privilege but a square deal; better living conditions, school privileges, housing accommodations and please keep on your own side of the road and we will be satisfied".[55]

With this argument, again, it was clear that there were two clearly discernible 'races'. The author even made them into separated peoples (Völker). Although the Commission,

[54] Cheryl Hudson, 'The Negro in Chicago'. Harmony in Conflict, 1919-22, in: European Journal of American Culture 29 (2010), pp. 53-67, p. 57.
[55] John P. Brushingham, October 31, 1919, Juror in Race Riot coroner's Jury, Report p. 41, see: <http://visualizingtheredsummer.com/?dhp-project=archive#online> red summer, accessed 20 January 2020. (Original in: American 1919 Race Riots Collection [JWJ MSS 126]. James Weldon Johnson Collection in the Yale Collection of American Literature, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library); see also Hudson, Harmony in Conflict 2010, p. 55.

as was indicated above, naturalized the existence of two "races" it did not support such 'segregation by agreement'. The racial project of the Commission was shaped by an ambivalent relational perspective when the issue of race was discussed. In some sections of its report, racism was seen as a mere misunderstanding.[56] Thus it cannot come as a surprise that the Commission tried to achieve "racial harmony".[57] The whole report does not mention the words racism or racist. On the one hand, the "race problem" was considered to be a "Negro problem"[58]. Thus, the origins of racism were blurred, although it was underlined that this problem "is not of the Negro's making". On the other hand, when the Commission referred to that 'problem' it was stated that "every citizen, regardless of color or racial origin, (is) bound to seek and forward its solution". Moreover, in this process rights and duties were seen to be "mutual and equal".[59] At a general level, the final responsibility for racial problems was seen to lie at the national level. As "the problem is national in its scope and gravity, the solution must be national".[60]

On the following pages I will discuss the solutions the Commission worked out in order to combat the racial tensions in Chicago and to avoid the escalation of violence as it had happed in summer 1919. First, the Commission put together a list of 59 recommendations to avoid future racial tensions.[61] These suggestions were directed towards the police and the justice system, city administration, organizations of civil society, to the public (white and African American), to the employers and labor organizations, public transport companies and to restaurants, theaters and so on, and to the press. All of them should be better organized and avoid racial prejudices and discriminatory practices. Housing and sanitation should be improved.

Second, the Commission hoped that education was an important way to avoid racial tensions. This education could only be put into practice on a national level, where "the nation must make sure that the Negro is educated for citizenship".[62] It was also claimed

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[56] CCRR Report 1922, p. XIV, XXIV; 300, 309, 399, 403, 594, 617.
[57] Hudson, Harmony in Conflict 2010, p. 62.
[58] CCRR Report 1922, p. XXIII.
[59] CCRR Report 1922, p. XXIII.
[60] CCRR Report 1922, p. XXIII
[61] CCRR report 1922, pp. 640-652.
[62] Ibid.

that if all white and all African American leaders would educate their followers that racism would disappear (and I would add: but the system of two races persisted):

> "Both races need to understand…. that relations of amity are the only protection against race clashes; that these relations cannot be forced, but will come naturally as the leaders of each race develop within their own ranks a realization of the gravity of this problem and a vital interest in its solution, and an attitude of confidence, respect, and friendliness toward the people of the other race."[63]

As the findings of the report indicate, the education system in Chicago was massively shaped by racism. Putting any hope in the potentially anti-racist qualities of this system is more than irritating.

Generally, the report of the Commission put high hopes on social evolution. Using a progressive comparison, in this case in an evolutionary form, it was pointed out, the "Negro race must develop, as all races have developed, from lower to higher planes of living; and must base its progress upon industry, efficiency, and moral character".[64] This argument was influenced by the famous Chicago based urban sociologist Robert E. Park and especially by one of his scholars, Charles S. Johnson.[65] As indicated above, the influence of social Darwinism with its hierarchy of races and the idea that races differed in mental and physical characteristics was present. This was combined with the "race relations cycle" which described the evolution of the races in four steps. This cycle had the stages of competition, conflict, accommodation and had its end point in the assimilation of the races.[66] As especially the elements 'competition' and 'conflict' underline this cycle was shaped by comparisons.

Two other progressive comparisons made in the report of the Commission underline the abstract trust in social evolution, and also make it more explicit and precise. First,

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[63] CCRR Report 1922, p. XXIV.
[64] Ibid.
[65] See Hudson, Harmony in Conflict 2010, p. 61; Bulmer, Research Methods 1981; Aldon D. Morris, The Scholar Denied. W.E.B. Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology, Oakland 2015, p. 115f.
[66] Morris, Scholar Denied 2015, p. 115f.

there was a trust in the democratic potentials of urban live (1). This urbanized evolutionary social-political progress would also breed an advanced masculine rationality (2).

First, in a progressive comparison with the comparata urban lifestyle in Chicago (a) and rural patterns of living (b) city life was seen as a much more advanced way of living. Without any doubt urban life was deemed to pave the way for social and political progress based on progressive rationality (tertia). This, for example, becomes obvious, in the section of the report which analyzes the former life African Americans migrants had left on their way from the South to Chicago.[67] Although the housing conditions they had to face in Chicago were sharply criticized, it was seemingly inevitable that they would change to the better over time. Moreover, city life would contribute to a process of progress by educating African Americans. When the rural migrants, the Commission mainly referred to male migrants, had themselves adjusted to the more rational urban lifestyle, they would be much better able to control their emotions and to employ more disciplined work ethics. This process of progress would dominate over and slowly eradicate the much-criticized mentality of casual laborers freely switching between phases of extensive leisure and of hard work.[68]

Second, in another progressive comparison which had urban rationality (as indicator of progress) as a tertia, the violence employed in the Chicago "riot" was compared with earlier „racial outbreaks".[69] The Chicago "riot" did not see emotional excitement about the harassment of women or about other sexually coded crimes allegedly committed by African Americans.[70] This had been the case in Springfield in August 1908 or in East St. Louis in May and July 1917.[71] Moreover, it was stressed that in Chicago in summer 1919 there had been no hangings, burnings, and mutilations of African Americans.[72] These arguments support the interpretation that the Commission was convinced that

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[67] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 93-103.
[68] CCRR Report 1922, p. 620f and 373.
[69] CCRR Report 1922, p. 17.
[70] CCRR Report 1922, p. 1.
[71] CCRR Report 1922, p. 68 and 71f.
[72] CCRR Report 1922, p. 17. See for details of southern violence Mattias Smangs, Doing Violence, Making Race. Lynching and white racial group formation in the U.S. South, 1882-1930, New York/London 2017.

the Chicago case, although people were killed and injured, was very different from other "race riots". The violence committed in Chicago was more rational – although it remained very ambivalent.

The violent street actions during the of summer 1919 were neither aimed at torturing nor mutilating African Americans. In this narrative, the northern whites behaved more rational than their rural and/or southern fellows. In the streets of Chicago, whites and African Americans were, as I have mentioned above, armed with guns, bats, clubs etc. but the violence that was employed in Chicago was less archaic than the one employed in the South.[73] The violent street clashes between African Americans and whites surely did cause a death toll but it was an open manly contest. Risks lay on both sides: attackers as well as the attacked could be severely hurt or could die.

The CCRR's progressive comparison focused on urban-based social-political progress and advanced masculine rationality, however, could only be sustained, if some important violent players of the racially coded clashes in the summer of 1919 were excluded. This exclusion was put into practice through a, what I would call, hoodlum narrative. At its center stood „gangs of hoodlums"[74] which were deemed to be responsible for most of the emotionally driven uncontrolled violent acts. They were supported by and closely related to "athletic clubs" (Ragen's Colts, Lotus Club, Mayflower).[75] These 'gangs of hoodlums' often were the driving forces in leading what the Commission labelled mobs.[76] Although the report indicated, that gangs and athletic clubs often violently expressed what the surrounding white community felt,[77] during the riot these entities through their massive employment of uncontrolled violence had crossed a red line. This lack of rational self-control excluded them from the rationality of urban life.

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[73] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 79-85. Among the 52 deaths which occurred on the streets of Chicago (one African American boy drowned), 25 were shot (48 per cent), 18 were stabbed (35 per cent), and 9 were slain (17 per cent), calculated based on CCRR Report 1922, pp. 655-667.
[74] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 1, 3, 12, 16f., 35, 47, 50, 52, 619.
[75] Ibid, p. 16f.
[76] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 22-24, 47-49; 640f.;
[77] CCRR Report 1922, p. 293.

For the Commission they were elements of the past, no harbingers of an urbanized rational future.

In studying the report of the CCRR it becomes obvious that not only the violence whites employed was manly coded and rational. In view of the Commission, African Americans in 1919 Chicago, too, acted in a masculine and rational manner. They armed themselves (also with guns) and they fought back in open confrontations. This militant and masculine self-defense was a pattern of action of African Americans, which in this intensity did surface for the first time in 1919 and was publicly discussed.[78] This militant, masculine self-defense was motivated by several factors. Generally, in the US there was what Jörn Leonhard describes as a "revolution of rising expectations"[79]: soldiers who had fought in the First Word War expected to receive not only respect and recognition from their nation but hoped for social political gains and improved political participation as well.

In Chicago, the African American 8th Infantry regiment whose soldiers had recently returned from French battlefields[80] contributed to a new spirit and practice of armed self-defense. These veterans organized what an eye witness retrospectively called in referring to his experiences in World War One a "Hindenburg-line" of organized groups.[81] In this implicit comparison of defense tactics between fighting in a war and fighting in an US-American domestic social conflict the dividing line between external and internal affairs was eroded.

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[78] See Jonathan S. Coit, "Our changed attitude": Armed Defense and the New Negro in the 1919 Chicago race Riot, in: Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era 11 (2012), pp. 225-256.

[79] Jörn Leonhard,1917-1920 and the Global Revolution of Rising Expectations, in: Rinke/Wildt (eds.), Revolutions 2017, pp. 31-51.

[80] Reed, Door 2014, p. 285f.

[81] See for the quote Adam Ewing, The Age of Garvey. How a Jamaican activist created a mass movement and changed global black politics, Princeton and Oxford 2014, p. 79; also Krugler, Racial Violence 2014, p. 117. The activities of Garveyan activists (among them burnings of the US American flag) are outlined in CCRR, Report 1922, pp. 59-64.

Moreover, in Chicago through armed self-defense[82], many African Americans echoed and put into practice, the statement W.E.B. Du Bois had given in a famous issue of the journal "Crisis" in May 1919:

> "… we are cowards and jackasses if now that that war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land. We return. We return from fighting. We return fighting. Make way for Democracy!" [83]

This practice of comparing, too, signaled that it had become imaginable that the dividing line between external and internal struggles of nation states had become permeable. [84] Future studies will have to find out if and how far this war-induced erosion contributed to a decay of the stability of nation states and promoted social change (incl. revolutions). Such transnationally oriented studies would help to contextualize the racially coded street violence in Chicago in the summer of 1919 into a wider global setting of social change.

4. Conclusion

This paper has elaborated first steps towards an approach which can help to generate new insights about the racially coded street violence of July and August of 1919 and about related problems. Three interrelated perspectives were integrated: the social construction of race and racism based on racial projects (1), the triangular setting (perpetrator-victim-audience/third parties) of social conflict (including race/racism) and violence, and the study of practices of comparing (3). In 1919 there was a widely shared assumption of similarity (Gleichartigkeitsannahme), that there are two distinct races ('white' and 'negro'). In the racial projects considered in this article these entities were naturalized, no further differentiations were made. Generally, this brief study has shown that race and with its race-related practices of comparing were deeply encoded in different sections of urban society and in social organizations in Chicago. Racial projects were present in housing, on public streets and places, in public transport, on the

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[82] CCRR Report 1922, pp. 477 and 488ff.
[83] W.E.B. Du Bois, Returning Soldiers, in: The Crisis 18 (May 1919), p. 13.
[84] This question is at the center of the research project A03 of the Bielefeld SFB 1288. See https://www.uni-bielefeld.de/(en)/sfb1288/projekte/a03.html (accessed 20.02.2020).

shop-floor, in labor unions, in the press and also in the Chicago Commission on Race Relations. The field of labor relations was so complex a setting of racial formation that it is hard to generalize which racial project was dominant. The racial projects elaborated in the case of Chicago addressed different third parties/audiences. The press was a not a passive audience. On the one hand, the press was an active third party which played an important role in communicating the often localized patterns of racism to translocal audiences. On the other hand, in doing this, the newspapers often added their own interpretations of racism and gave impulses to see racial differences as unchangeable.

As also the racial projects formulated in the report of the CCRR indicated, the construction of race was explicitly based on practices of comparing. The latter were shaped by progressive comparisons which focused on trust in urban-based social-political progress and in advanced masculine rationality. These two patterns (urban progress and masculine rationality) help to explain why the CCCR did not elaborate more far-reaching proposals to overcome racism and its potential of violent escalations.

The practices of comparing used by (white) local social actors in Chicago tried to bring order and stability to an urban society whose members felt themselves threatened through massive social change induced by World War One. The study of practices of comparing indicated, that in 1919 it had become imaginable that the dividing line between external and internal struggles of nation states had become permeable. Globally this war-induced erosion might have further contributed to a decay of the stability of nation states and thus also could have accelerated social change (incl. revolutions) on a larger scale. Taken together, however, urban order and urban masculine rationality seemed to pave the way towards a more peaceful future, in which the system of two races persisted but racism had disappeared.

PROJECT AREA A – CONFLICT AND COMPETITION

By placing the act of comparing at the heart of the SFB, it focuses on a practice that has multiple shapes and forms. Therefore, the projects pay particular attention to situations and contexts in which comparing can be performed in many different ways. Those who see themselves in direct competition with others and have to make decisions compare differently than writers of fiction or scientists, for instance, whose comparisons do not immediately result in concrete actions.

Project area A focuses on practices of comparing in situations of conflict and competition. Do different practices of comparison get formed in situations of conflict or competition as well as in social spaces of (self-)reflexivity? Do some cases evoke looking for differences and others for commonalities?
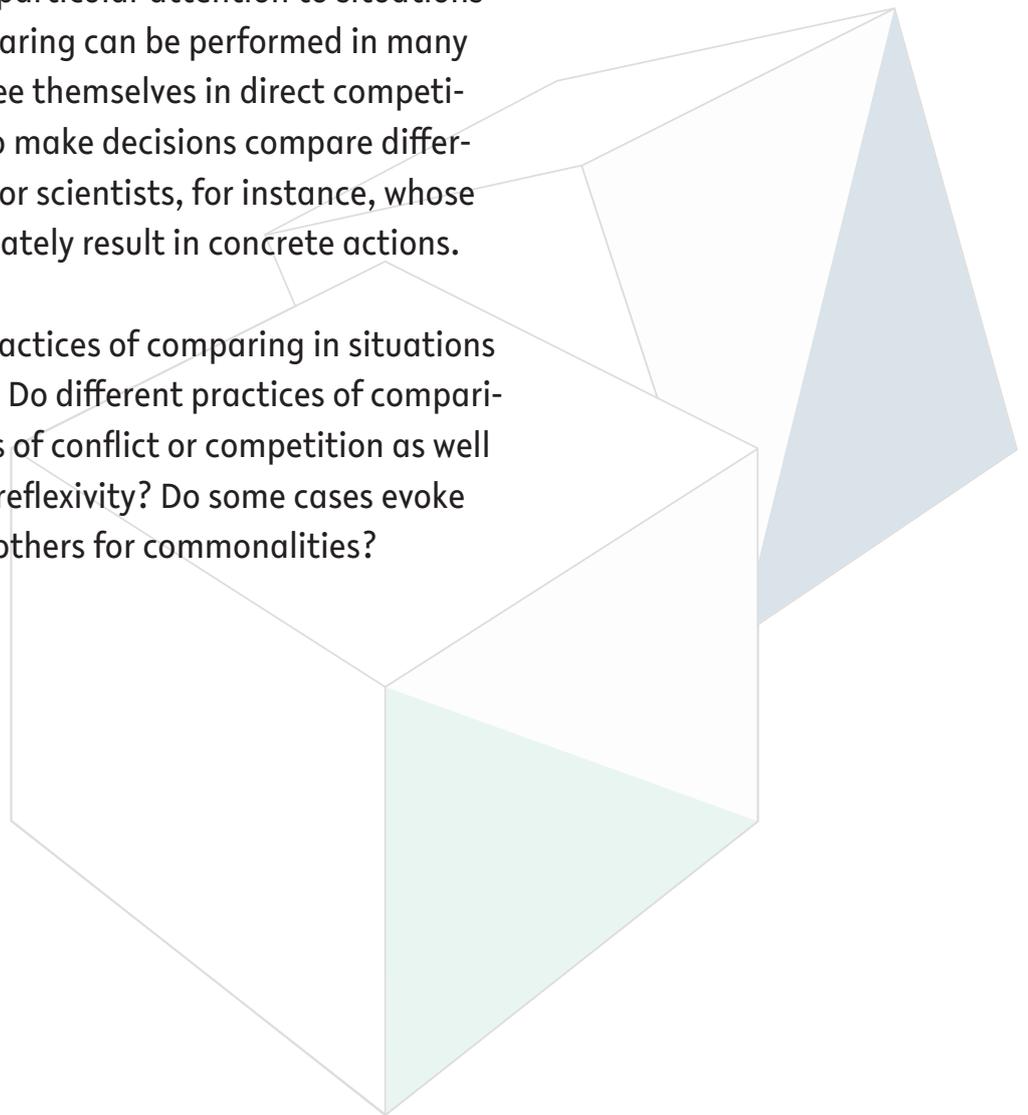
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Our everyday life is shaped by ratings, statistics and competition, whether it is sports, politics or science. To compare is believed to be objective. It supposedly helps us to obtain clear results. But how neutral is it to compare?

People compare themselves regarding their qualities and skills, companies compare their finances, countries their gross domestic product. To compare, for instance, influences how we perceive the other: Is it similarities or differences that get to stand out? Which judgements do we reach? When and why do habitual opinions sneak into the allegedly impartial act of comparing?

Researchers working in fields of history, literary studies, philosophy, art history, political science and law are for the first time studying how comparative practices order and change the world. The Collaborative Research Centre (SFB) 1288 "Practices of Comparing" is conducting fundamental research by shifting the focus from 'the comparison' to a 'practice of comparing': What do agents do when they compare?

One objective is to raise awareness to the fact that the allegedly natural practice of comparing is never innocent, objective or neutral.

By studying an essential practice of order and dynamics in modern but also premodern, European and non-European societies, the SFB aims to contribute to a model for rethinking history, societies and historical change in the context of the latest historical and cultural theories.

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