

Dossier Presentation: Policing Demonstrations

Apresentação do Dossiê: Policiamento de Manifestações

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Abstract

The policing of demonstrations is a crucial activity that reveals much about the quality of democracy in a given society. In addition to presenting the papers that make up the dossier, this article contributes to Northern Ireland's accumulated experience in dealing with demonstrations. Brazil and Northern Ireland constitute divided societies in which the police is co-responsible for conflicts and face serious legitimacy problems, at least for vulnerable groups. Lessons from Northern Ireland indicate that mutual understanding between police and protesters is vital to limit the potential for public order incidents and events to become unmanageable.

Keywords: policing of demonstrations; protests; public order; dissent; human rights.

Resumo

O policiamento das manifestações é uma atividade crucial que revela muito sobre a qualidade da democracia em uma dada sociedade. Além de apresentar os artigos que compõem o dossiê este artigo contribui com a experiência acumulada da Irlanda do Norte para lidar com manifestações. O Brasil e a Irlanda do Norte constituem-se em sociedades divididas nas quais a polícia é corresponsável pelos conflitos e enfrenta problemas sérios de legitimidade, pelo menos para os grupos vulneráveis. As lições da Irlanda do Norte apontam para o fato de que o entendimento mútuo entre a polícia e os manifestantes é vital para limitar o potencial para que incidentes e eventos de ordem pública se tornem incontroláveis.

Palavras-chave: policiamento de manifestações; protestos; ordem pública; dissenso; direitos humanos.

Since June 2013, when a large popular movement of national proportions shook the political system in large street demonstrations that paralyzed major cities in Brazil for several days, the policing of demonstrations entered the country's political agenda. This issue is not restricted to Brazil and is also being considered in other Latin American countries, looking at the experience accumulated by countries with more consolidated democracy in the northern hemisphere.

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What motivated us to organize this dossier was the desire to map the research on the policing of demonstrations underway in Brazil. The number of article proposals received fell short of expectations. This is a significant fact and shows that, despite the quality of the texts included in the dossier, many were rejected because they were still in the early stages of research, which reveals that this is not yet a consolidated field of study in Brazil.

The comparison between the experiences of policing demonstrations in Brazil and Northern Ireland is justified because these are two realities which, despite obvious differences, have very similar aspects in terms of public safety.³ In 1983 Interpol considered Northern Ireland to be the most dangerous place in the world for a police officer. Exercising the police profession both in Northern Ireland and in Brazil means being in a hostile environment and generates the same reflexes: not putting the uniform to dry on the clothesline outside the house, hiding the true nature of the professional activity from friends and neighbours, always being vigilant when walking on the street and being alert for possible attacks (BREEN, 2017; COSTA, 2005). Another aspect common to both countries is that they are divided societies. Studies on policing focus on liberal democracies and homogeneous societies, not on broken or ethnically divided societies in which the police have sides (WEITZER, 1995). As a consequence, many classic studies on police deal with issues whose importance is secondary to these societies, such as the organization and occupational culture of police forces in the United States or the United Kingdom. In divided societies the police are co-responsible for conflicts and faces serious legitimacy problems, at least for vulnerable groups. In them, the police are evaluated not so much for their merits but for all that they symbolize for the supporters of the dominant group. By being identified with those who hold power, the police are confused with the interests of the State and the changes introduced are not effective unless they are associated with profound social transformations. In these societies, public security policy consists basically in border policing and is limited to. "[...] surrounding the working-class neighbourhoods with a kind of sanitary repressive threshold, deploying the police like dogs on the poor and protecting the noble areas of the city." (SOARES, 2000, p. 45).

The focus of policing is on public order maintenance, which should be understood as the preservation of public spaces free from "unwanted" citizens, and not as the guarantee of citizens' individual rights, which include the right to manifest dissent.

The 2013 protests in Brazil highlighted the need for law enforcement to update itself. Some meetings were held with representatives of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (LANGEANI, 2019) and resulted in the provision of a mediator to facilitate the dialogue between protesters and police by the São Paulo State Police in 2019. We have much to learn from the experience of Northern Ireland, where conflicts began in 1968, with street demonstrations and for three decades seemed to be an insoluble problem. Hence the importance that the research on the subject has acquired in this country and which we report below.

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Public Order Policing in Northern Ireland

The policing of public (dis)order has long occupied a central position in the domestic policing of Northern Ireland. From the civil rights movement of the 1960s through the recent disturbances and disputes over parades in (CAMERON, 1969; MCDONALD, 2012a; 2012b; NI RIOTS..., 2021), conflagration between the police and the country's (still) divided communities continues to symbolize an acceptable and seemingly inevitable consequence of a country in transition as it emerges from conflict to peace (MULCAHY, 2006; SHIRLOW; MURTAGH, 2006). But so too as part of the contemporary landscape, beyond events associated with policing 'problematics' associated with parades and protests, policing in the country must also contend with 'modern' forms of public order situation – such as football-related disorder and night-time economy management (BAIRNER, 2000, 2002). Thus, it may be observed that public order situations and the policing thereof (continue) to retain high levels of 'inter-connectedness' across a number of social, political and cultural contexts in Northern Ireland – which in turn impact upon how the police engage with communities on a day-to-day basis.

Much of the focus on the responses to civil disorders in the country has been on more technical aspects of policing, especially in terms of force used against individuals and communities; the weaponry and tactics employed; along with allegations of political partisanship and discriminatory practice in controlling and maintaining public order (BRYAN; JARMAN, 1999; COMMITTEE ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE, 1996, 1997; NI AOLAIN, 2000; RYDER, 1997; WEITZER, 1999). More recently, police organisational developments and changes associated with the reforms under the Independent Commission on Policing in Northern Ireland (ICP) in 1999 have helped shift this focus, with the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) considered as one of the most overseen, accountable and human rights compliant policing anywhere in the world (ELLISON, 2007; NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD, 2020; OVERSEEING..., 2007; TOPPING, 2008a, 2015). This was exemplified in the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, following the 'G20' riots in England in 2009, which noted progress and asked: "why these new up-to-date [public order] tactics...used by the Police Service of Northern Ireland have not been shared and adopted nationally [...]." (HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, 2009, p. 7).

Furthermore, the creation of an independent Parades Commission under the Public Processions (Northern Ireland) Act 1998 has helped to further distance PSNI from the 'politics' of contested and controversial public order events, especially those associated with the traditional Loyalist/Orange Order parades and their associated counter-protests (BRYAN, 2000; HAMILTON, JARMAN; BRYAN, 2001).

However, a significant gap in both police institutional and academic discourse over the years has been the perspectives of communities themselves to public order policing (HAMILTON; JARMAN; BRYAN, 2001). With the exception of some limited research over the years into community perceptions of civil disturbances (BYRNE, 2006; BRYAN; JARMAN, 1997; HALL, 2004; HANSSON, 2005; JARMAN, 2005; JARMAN; BRYAN, 2000), the majority of available literature tends mostly to consider more generalised community perspectives on policing and police-community relations (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; ELLISON, 2000; ELLISON; MULCAHY, 2001; MARTIN, 2021; TOPPING, 2008a, 2008b; TOPPING; BYRNE, 2012a, 2012b). Related to this analytical gap is the fact that the definition of public order has seldom been interrogated

within the context of Northern Ireland, as a byword for dispute and disorder of all types, both at the more 'horizontal' inter-community, sectarian level; and from a more 'vertical' perspective, to denote confrontation and contest between police and communities themselves. And crucially, there has been a failure to examine public order policing sufficiently outside the traditional 'frame' of parades and protests – especially in terms of considering the dynamics underpinning the ongoing potential for more sporadic forms of public order incidents directed at the PSNI within Loyalist/Unionist and Nationalist/Republican communities (CROWD..., 2012; JOURNALISTS..., 2019; MICHAEL..., 2012; NI RIOTS..., 2021; MCKEOWN, 2012; POLICE..., 2010). This is especially so within the context of more than forty days of protests and incidents of public disorder associated with dispute over the flying of the Union flag in Belfast at the end of 2012 (Kilpatrick, 2013).

Defining Public Order Within a Community Context

In attempting to provide a definition to public order from a community, rather than technical police-institutional perspective, an initial point of reference is the fact that public (dis)order (in its broadest sense) tends to be defined by the reactions to (police responses) and consequences of (community/group actions) events rather than the causes of those events themselves (REICHER; STOTT, 2011). Indeed, the policing of public (dis)order in Northern Ireland is predominantly defined through the retrospective application of accounts and disorder 'metrics' as a means of setting often complex chains of events and situations into an intelligible order. Thus, at more popular levels of understanding, such approaches tend to decontextualize the dynamics of causation and community participation in public order-type events (BAGGULEY; HUSSAIN, 2008); while reducing the focus of debate to that of 'hard' or 'soft' policing tactics and 'mob mentalities', without recourse as to how situations/events developed (JARMAN, 2006b; MULCAHY, 2006).

It is important to note that to define public order through a community lens is not to excuse or justify the actions of individuals or groups. But rather, such an approach is about providing a more complete understanding, especially where it may be contended that to a certain extent, police and governmental actions may contribute: 'to social disorder and conflict...Every government is therefore drawn to explanations that relate the violence of [public disorder] to the violent nature of the rioters alone' (REICHER; STOTT, 2011, p. 116).

In providing a definition of public order, it may be observed that the propensity for such situations in Northern Ireland, both between communities and directed at police, are a function of the 'liminal space' afforded as part of the post-conflict, transitional nature of the polity (SCHWENGRUBER, 2000). In spite of the 1994 paramilitary ceasefires; the Good Friday Agreement of 1998; the ICP police reforms in 1999; and the devolution of policing and justice powers to Stormont in 2010, it is the long histories of inter-communal violence which arguably transcend the country's broader 'normalisation' – and which facilitate the regular and ritual nature of public (dis)order (BRADFORD *et al.*, 2019; JARMAN, 2006b; MARTIN, 2021). At the macro level, community and/or group potential to engage in disorder may be viewed as an 'accepted alternative' for dealing with contested social and political issues (MCALISTER; SCRATON; HAYDON, 2009).

But so too at the level of locale, public (dis)order may be defined as part of ‘symbolic’ group grievances, where precipitating events are indicative of previous failed or limited attempts to resolve communal problems (REICHER; STOTT, 2011; SCARMAN, 1981). Indeed, this point has particular salience in Northern Ireland insofar as the relatively settled, devolved political circumstances are still characterized by unresolved contestations around sectarianism, parading and community cohesion (BYRNE; GORMLEY-HEENAN; ROBINSON, 2012; BRADFORD *et al.*, 2019; BRYAN, 2000; MORROW, 2006; TOPPING, 2015).

On the one hand, the evidence would suggest that public (dis)order in the country has consistently been defined through its inevitability, especially within socio-economically marginalised Loyalist and Republican communities – as an issue simply to be policed or managed (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; JARMAN, 2004, 2008). Thus, public order from this perspective is by default defined as a police/security, rather than social issue. And on the other hand, public order may be defined as a consequence or function of the political ‘fault lines’ which continue to run through the country where even the very nature of political authority has always been a point of contention in Northern Ireland (RUBBRIDGER; REES, 2011; REICHER; STOTT, 2011). Therefore, with public order events and situations failing to acquire wider social implications beyond the confines of their own inevitability, by definition they are a phenomenon to be managed and policed, not resolved (CAMPBELL, 1993; KING; BREASLEY, 1996).

But in taking a step back from some of the broader issues of defining public order in Northern Ireland, it is of note that the term public order gives a degree of superficial coherence to the underlying and wide-ranging circumstances which contribute to such events and situations (NEWBURN, 2003). In this respect, to simply define public order in the country without reference to recent histories and relationships of violence is to imply, or attempt to define public order, as somehow mindless or meaningless (REICHER *et al.*, 2007). Similarly, attempts at producing general definitions of public order through political ‘justification’ or explanations operate on the ‘spurious assumption that simply because actions apparently have the same form, then they are to be explained by the same or similar causes’ (BAGGULEY; HUSSAIN, 2008, p. 36). It is therefore appropriate to examine some of the subtleties associated with variations in public order beyond such generalised definitions.

In terms of public (dis)order related to parades and marches in the country, as the most visible form of confrontation and contest in the country (BRYAN, 2000; HALL, 2004), such events may be classified as ‘contained’ public order, with (usually) some degree of organisation, familiar participants to police, predictable courses of action and proactive approaches to management (WADDINGTON, 2007). And while much attention, not to mention police resources, are devoted to these events, beyond popular images of ‘riot-clad’ police officers engaged in forceful confrontation, such events have *de facto* become less contentious over the past decade in Northern Ireland. Therefore, apart from infrequent outbreaks of violence and disorder, ‘contained’ public order events and situations may be defined through ‘order maintenance’ rather than disorder, whereby the PSNI will generally under-enforce the strict rule of law and negotiate on the ground in exchange for compromise and best possible outcomes (NOAKES; KLOCKERS; GILLHAM, 2005; WADDINGTON, 1996).

However, below the macro level of marches and parades as ‘contained’ public order events, communities across Northern Ireland still retain a capacity to engage in

'transgressive' public order, defined as more sporadic incidents where those involved are often unfamiliar to police, unwilling to cooperate and are prepared to challenge police for control of public space (WADDINGTON, 2007). It is however, within such specific, more localized contexts in which violence and disorder, either between communities or directed at police, in which additional challenges for public order definition may be observed (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; JARMAN, 1999; JARMAN; O'HALLORAN, 2000).

With recent evidence pointing to strained police-community relations and difficulties in delivering policing with the community by the PSNI, public order in a transgressive sense may be defined as a result of two factors (BRADFORD *et al.*, 2019; TOPPING; BYRNE, 2012a). Firstly, both Loyalist and Republican communities with histories of conflicted relations with police may have problems dissociating themselves from 'past' policing experiences where they fail to see 'new' policing being delivered as part of the ICP vision (TOPPING, 2008b, 2015). In this regard, the potential for public order may be influenced by the continued delivery of 'familiar' policing operations, such as patrols in armoured Land Rovers, further fuelled through embedded and tolerated violence against the police (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; ELLISON, 2000; MULCAHY, 2006; POLICE..., 2021).

Secondly, and on a related point, where such transgressive public order potential exists, this in turn naturally shapes and pre-forms policing responses at the local level (STOTT, 2009). Therefore, with policing in such areas more oriented towards retaining a capacity to deal with public order situations, more robust policing responses become the main community experience, along with attendant perceptions of harassment, poor service and attitudes from police, reinforcing the original problem of dissociation (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; BYRNE; CONWAY; OSTERMEYER, 2005; MCALISTER; SCRATON; HAYDON, 2009; MCVEIGH, 1994). Thus, set against the bigger concerns with 'contained' public order events, such everyday 'public order grievances' fail to find an audience with other communities, political or policing mechanisms, which in turn fuels the potential for public order incidents to act as a challenge to police legitimacy and authority at the level of the locale (MULCAHY, 2006; WADDINGTON, 2003).

However, having attempted to provide a working definition of public order policing within a community context in Northern Ireland, it is clear that the contingency and context of public disorder is an important starting point as part of framing and defining such activity beyond the violence and conflict itself. As noted previously, attempts to explain public order should not be confused with excusing the disruption and damage caused to wider society. But to define public order more fully is to move beyond populist theories of 'mad mobs', recreational violence and an overly narrow focus on parades, and to move towards more structured understandings of opportunity, mobilizing dynamics and framing processes (DELLA PORTA; DIANI, 1999). Indeed, it is only from this perspective that we can begin to shift away from seeing public (dis)order of all kinds and its 'embeddedness' in Northern Ireland as a symptom of wider social and political problems rooted in recent history, to which a technical policing definition and response will only ever provide but a short-term, costly public safety measure.

Explaining Public (Dis)Order

Having established that no simple definition of public order exists when set against the complex array of dynamics which underpin propensities for violence and disorder in Northern Ireland, it is therefore important to establish a more holistic explanation of (the potential for) public (dis)order itself.

As alluded to previously, the term public order is a significantly over-generalised term, applied to any and all types of engagement between gatherings of individuals – either in a contained or transgressive sense – and the police. But in many regards, to simply talk of public order, crowds or violence is to ignore the objective diversity of attitudes, opinions and intentions brought to bear in such contexts (BAGGULEY; HUSSAIN, 2008). Here, such generalised and populist understanding about public order-type situations rests with what Reicher and Stott (2011) would term ‘classic’ crowd psychology, or ‘mad mobs’ theory. Inherent in such understandings is an assumption that groups of individuals and/or crowds are necessarily irrational, dangerous and open to exploitation, notwithstanding a belief that crowds are somehow a single psychological entity (REICHER, 1996; REICHER, 2001; STOTT, 2009).

Empirical research (REICHER; STOTT, 2011; REICHER *et al.*, 2004; REICHER *et al.*, 2007) has given way to more detailed, sophisticated understandings of public order situations, considered through what is termed the Elaborated Social Identity Model (ESIM). Here, the ESIM posits two key aspects. Firstly, that far from crowds simply acting as mad mobs, they possess a range of social ‘identities’, intentions and willingness to engage in conflict with others, which are neither static nor fixed. Thus, there is a need to differentiate between ‘physical’ crowds and ‘psychological’ crowds – and laterally to understand what processes and dynamics can ‘merge’ these separate forms of crowd into collective action (or not), especially where:

Crowd action is not random and uncontrolled but rather is a faithful reflection of the social beliefs of the groups involved [...] even when crowds are violent, the nature of that violence – both the targets that are chosen and the manner of the attacks upon them – reflect belief systems that are current in the relevant community (REICHER *et al.*, 2007, p. 407).

The second and related assertion of the ESIM is that any explanation of public order must also include the presence and actions of the police ((DELLA PORTA; REITER, 1998). Moving away from a positivistic focus on crowds *per se*, causes of public (dis)order have traditionally rested with the ‘mob’, to the exclusion of considering police action and therefore strategies to deal with public order (REICHER *et al.*, 2007). Such a position related to police dynamics would also sit within ESIM thinking insofar as the psychological salience of groups and crowds depends upon the existence of ‘the other’, who do not physically have to be present at an event. Therefore, where ‘the other’ is the police, tactics and strategy may be viewed as pivotal in potentially changing or influencing the nature of a crowd’s social identity (REICHER, 2001; STOTT, 2009), which in turn would suggest that public order incidents and events, from the perspective of the community, have the potential to be influenced where processes which identify mitigating and escalating factors can be developed (STOTT; REICHER, 1998). As succinctly captured by Drury and Reicher (2000, p. 598), beyond the actions and intentions of crowds and groups, we must consider the question as to what policing actions ‘unifies the crowd, creates the conditions under which moderates move to the extreme position while the ‘extremists’ stay put’.

Aside from the ESIM, it is also important to examine some of the more localized factors which could broadly fit into explanations of public order. At the Northern Ireland level, Mulcahy (2006) contends that much minor, transgressive-type public disorder may be linked to the more major (contained) events. In specific reference to

parades and protests of all kinds, Jarman (2007) further argues that such events tend to mark collective public identity, providing both communal solidarity and symbolism to denote 'difference' to 'the other'. Thus, using Innes' (2004) 'signal crimes' perspective, the 'trigger events' of major contained-type public order may be used to justify or develop transgressive events and situations at a local level.

In essence, it is therefore the 'ripple effect' of symbolic, contained events upon local attitudes which have the power to create the necessary pre-formed psychological groups salience to engage in public (dis)order. On another level, it is also possible to argue through the ESIM, that the power of collective negative police experiences may play a role in precipitating (or not) the potential for disorder (MULCAHY, 2006; MCVEIGH, 1994). With either direct, indirect or second-hand experiences of the 'other' (community or police) as a reference point, these in turn may be invoked as, or related to, 'trigger events (as above) which can be used to translate such experiences into action on the ground, possibly justifying violence and disorder in the minds of the group. This is particularly with regard to the evidence of young peoples' negative experiences of policing in Northern Ireland (TOPPING; BRADFORD, 2020), especially in marginalised and/or communities with limited or strained relations with the police insofar as: "young people, who had grown up in communities that had demonized the police and to an extent legitimized and justified the use of force, need little encouragement to throw missiles and petrol bombs at police officers and their vehicles." (BYRNE; JARMAN, 2011, p. 435).

In this respect, contact between young people and the police in such areas, particularly Loyalist and Republican working-class communities, may result in violence and disorder being directed at the police rather than the police presence as deterring such events (BYRNE; CONWAY; OSTERMEYER, 2005; HANSSON, 2005; JARMAN, 2005, 2006a e b; MCALISTER; SCRATON; HAYDON, 2009). Such localized explanations of public order further have the potential to be exacerbated where, within 'hardline' areas and contested spaces, paramilitary orchestration can further draw in young people from the locale to engage in disorder (BYRNE; JARMAN, 2011; COWNIE, 2008; LEONARD, 2008, 2010; REICHER; STOTT, 2011).

In overview, it is clear that a range of influences contribute to a process of public order escalation (and therefore de-escalation). To accept, even to a limited extent, that the propagation of public order violence from community/group perspective is more complex than simply the violence itself, is to move beyond a narrow focus of 'mad mobs' theory and provide the basis for a more nuanced understanding of the heterogeneity to public order situations; and improve the potential for police strategy to influence outcomes (WADDINGTON, 2000). Such an approach may further allow for more sophisticated analyses of how public order is influenced by: the structural dynamics of community/police interaction and perceptions/attitudes to police; political and ideological relations between communities and police insofar as the issue of legitimacy may be understood; cultural dynamics between different communities and police in terms of the level of accommodation afforded by the police to community/group behaviours; situational factors, such as contested spaces which are more prone to violence; and interactional factors whereby the importance of coalface police-community interaction is managed in the interests mitigating potential for disorder (WADDINGTON; JONES; CRITCHER, 1987).

It must be noted that such an explanation is certainly not about deferential policing where the threat of public order necessitates particular forms of police response. However, it does provide a model for understanding where ground can be made between police and communities/groups to improve relations, or at least mitigate the potential for assumption and reaction (from both police and communities/groups) which, in the words of Reicher and Stott (2011), does little except to replicate and reinforce the dynamics which lead to public order situations escalating in the first place.

Policing Public (Dis)Order

At an organisational level, it may be understood that a variety of inter-related factors may determine police responses to public order incidents and events, such as: legal frameworks; police cultures; organisational planning; political contexts; community intelligence; community impact analysis; and patterns of previous interaction. Thus, such cumulative police 'knowledge' will ultimately determine responses to public order situation (STOTT, 2009). While many of these dynamics, such as legal frameworks and planning will remain relatively static, more 'fluid' factors such as police culture/attitudes and patterns of interaction serve to further influence contact at the coalface of public order. As Reicher *et al.* (2007) illustrate, similar levels of violent cultures exist among Scottish and English football fans at international fixtures and events, yet it is English fans who tend to be involved in more violent clashes per se. It is contended that such differential outcomes lie in reputations and perceptions – and therefore treatment and tactics used by police (and rival fans). Drawing upon the ESIM, while not in any way excusing violent intent conduct, the logic of the model would suggest that a focus on the contributory actions of police in (potential) public order situations should at least be considered.

Furthermore, it is vital for police to acknowledge that crowds and groups, whether as part of transgressive or contained public order situations, are not usually 'formalised' gatherings in that they possess hierarchical structures with communications and strategy. Therefore, either 'over-planning' or policing with pre-conceived attitudes may induce what Jefferson and Grimshaw (1984) would term a 'siege mentality' whereby a self-fulfilling prophecy of expected trouble will be held by police, presuming the intent of crowds and groups is for disorder. Here, the education of police officers as to the cultural norms of particular areas or the intentions/attitudes of groups towards the police should be an integral part of the public order policing 'process' (REICHER *et al.*, 2007).

In considering other organisational aspects as to public order policing by PSNI, the previous argument would suggest officer training, aside from legal issues and operational tactics, can play a key role in shaping interaction with group and crowds at public order incidents. As part of considering this issue, it is suggested there is at best minimal interaction between public order training for officers and the dynamics of crowd behaviour, such as understood through the ESIM (STOTT, 2009). In such cases, the propensity (for both contained and transgressive incidents) of police to impose a 'common fate' upon a crowd or group has the potential to generate conflict; while raising questions of police legitimacy (REICHER *et al.*, 2007). However, while this is not to presuppose courses of operational police action as deemed necessary by police commanders, it is to suggest that organizationally, police organisations should understand the implications of their public order tactics from the perspective of the crowd (JARMAN, 2006a; SCHWEINGRUBER, 2000).

Indeed, the vast majority of public order literature points out that either disproportionate or indiscriminate use of force by police is the main culprit in generating violent reactions from crowds and groups (REICHER, 1996; STOTT, 2009; WADDINGTON, 2007). Whether part of transgressive or contained public order policing, such use of force has the effect of redefining a sense of unity in crowds, groups, and communities, heightening the perception that conflict and disobedience is a legitimate course of action. As noted by Stott (2009, p. 8), police must understand the psychological and social process that make public (dis)order possible to emerge as the outcome of specific forms of group level interactions that are mainly and inadvertently initiated by police tactical responses. Thus, such chains of events tend to reinforce police perceptions of 'classic mob' views which may already be held (STOTT; REICHER, 1998).

Related to this is also the concept of the 'negotiated management model' (NMM) of dealing with public order incidents, a close relation to that of the 'No Surprises' model (JOINT COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RIGHTS, 2009; MCCAUSLAND, 2007). At a conceptual level the NMM advocates that police should aim to facilitate peaceful behaviour; provide graded tactical responses; use information-led approaches to achieve dialogue and communications; and avoid undifferentiated use of force (REICHER; STOTT, 2011). The 'No Surprises' approach may be thought of as encompassing such principles, but is further underpinned by what may be conceived as more holistic, 'ethically grounded' policing considerations, set within human rights, accountability and 'policing with the community' as defined by the ICP (1999).

However, bound up in the principles of ESIM, the NMM principally aims to maximize and facilitate the legitimate aims of crowds and groups. And while such an approach may be more amenable to contained rather than transgressive public order situations, "the aim is to shape interactions between the police and crowd in such a way as to lead peaceful crowd members to categorise themselves along with the police and in opposition to violent factions [...]" (REICHER *et al.*, 2007, p. 410). Ultimately, where the police can be viewed as facilitators, not adversaries, it can aid in crowd self-regulation (STOTT *et al.*, 2011).

Though beyond theoretical aspects related to the NMM or 'No Surprises' model, a number of challenges are posed for the PSNI by virtue of the unique circumstances which underpin public order issues in Northern Ireland on a practical level. On the one hand, at least for contained public order events, it may be argued that the NMM process has to some extent been taken out of the PSNI's hands by virtue of the Parades Commission (PARADES COMMISSION, 2021). As a statutory body designed to make determinations on parades and protests, it effectively removes the PSNI from the wider negotiation/facilitative processes, 'pre-forming' their actions to deliver those determinations (JARMAN, 2003). On the other hand, evidence would suggest that the facilitative potential of the NMM in the country is actually mediated through a range of actors beyond the PSNI, including the Parades Commission, politicians, community workers and organisations, and paramilitary actors (JARMAN; BRYAN, 2000; JARMAN, 1997, 2003). Therefore, it is possible that from a community perspective, the intentions and objectives of the PSNI from a NMM perspective, may be misunderstood or misinterpreted as they are refracted through such intermediaries.

Beyond contained-type public order events, transgressive public order incidents also pose issues for the PSNI as part of the NMM. With many of the NMM principles bound up with those of community policing, the limited extent to which community

policing is being delivered within certain communities of Northern Ireland therefore has implications for public order policing (BYRNE; MONAGHAN, 2008; TOPPING, 2008b; BRADFORD *et al.*, 2019). Indeed, where community policing is not being delivered, or only to a limited extent, the necessary relations at a community level to facilitate police-community interaction, mutual understanding, communications and dialogue more generally is thus reduced (WADDINGTON, 2007). So in combination with the current 'severe' terrorist threat further restricting PSNI's delivery of community-oriented policing, a public order policing response becomes the default. In addition, public order-type policing then becomes the 'ordinary' experience of policing; which then drives perceptions that a 'common fate', blanket public order policing approach is being imposed; and which in turn can then feed the legitimization of pre-existing hostilities and negative attitudes towards PSNI (JEFFERSON, 1990).

As part considerations around the policing of public order, lessons from Northern Ireland point to the fact mutual understanding between police and crowds/groups is vital to limiting the potential for public order incidents and events to develop or escalate. As Reicher and Stott (2011) suggest, a 'communicative understanding', either through police training, tactics used, or informing groups/crowds of actions, is a necessary building block for mitigating the dynamics related to the potential for public (dis)order. With the emergence of new media and social media, yet untested avenues may further exist to improve the flow of information and understandings between the police and policed (REILLY, 2011). This may be one avenue for communicating with, and monitoring more fully groups and crowds in real time as a more fruitful and instant approach than through more traditional media channels. With news media traditionally used by PSNI as a means of post facto policing communication – not without conflict itself (FIVE..., 2012; NEWS..., 2011) – social media provides a further means for the PSNI to retain ownership and influence 'communicative understandings'.

But crucially, in getting to a more nuanced understanding of public order policing, it is apt to note that public order should not just be conceived in terms of 'hard' or 'soft' policing as part of populist debates, but in terms of process as to how best disorder can be avoided in the first instance. In this regard, it was the 3rd Report on ICP Recommendations 69 and 70 (PATTEN..., 2002) that stated the importance of developing public order and community policing approaches together – as two interlinked areas of policing in Northern Ireland. Underpinning this contention, a wider analysis of the literature to date would suggest that the closer the police are to events and communities, the greater the potential for them to amplify order rather than create disorder (REICHER; STOTT, 2011). The question of how best to achieve this set within the complexity of a landscape like Northern Ireland's transitional is therefore key for many communities who bear the brunt of public order events across the country, especially where policing in many areas and events largely mirrors the reactive, public order style of policing characteristic of the conflict, albeit in a relatively peacetime context (TOPPING, 2015).

The Articles of This Dossier

The dossier begins with the article " Dynamics of repressive action: the policing of protests in Rio Grande do Sul (1970-2015)", in which Eduardo Georjão Fernandes and Camila Farias da Silva address the issue from the interaction between social movements

and state institutions. The Protest Event Analysis methodology, employed by the authors, is also used by other researchers, such as Luciana Tatagiba (Unicamp) and Angela Alonso, Débora Alves Maciel and Rafael de Souza (Cebrap), to build databases on protests and police action.

Subsequently, Mariana Pinto Zoccal shows, in the article "We Approach Indiscriminately: An Analysis of the Policing Repertoires employed in the Case of Centro Cultural São Paulo", that the strategies of the Military Police of São Paulo include the infiltration of Army agents in the demonstrations, what is revealing about the social representations and the contested legitimacy that the police attribute to the protests.

In the third article, "Notes on the criminalization of social movements in Latin America: examples from Brazil and Mexico", Simone da Silva Ribeiro Gomes, Roxana Cavalcanti and Carlos de Jesús Gómez Abarca address the relationship between states and social movements in Latin America, based on the criminalization of protests in these two countries. In the following article, "Policing Crowds", Raquel de Oliveira Sousa applies the theory of crowd psychology to analyse the policing of football fans in Rio de Janeiro.

Finally, the dossier concludes in style with a photo essay by Sérgio Silva, who lost the sight in his left eye after being hit by a rubber bullet fired by the São Paulo Military Police while reporting. He represents the 837 people injured in the 2013 protests, among whom 117 were journalists (PROTESTOS..., 2014). All articles were submitted through the UEL's journal portal and evaluated by the referees of *Mediações* journal, to whom we are very grateful.

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