

Whose Streets? Police and Protester Struggles Over Space in Washington, DC, 29–30 September 2001

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Over the weekend of 29–30 September 2001, approximately 20,000 people participated in anti-war protests in Washington, DC. Based on firsthand observations and interviews with police officials, we analyze the response of the Metro DC police (MPDC) to three separate protests that weekend, including those sponsored by the Anti-Capitalist Convergence (ACC), the International Action Center (IAC) and the Washington Peace Center (WPC). Our observations illustrate how the MPDC's efforts to control the space in which the respective protests occurred varied across demonstrations. The MPDC tightly controlled the space in which transgressive groups (ACC) demonstrated, but were much more lenient with contained groups (WPC, IAC). We relate the MPDC tactics to changes in the policing of protest since the 1999 World Trade Organization protests in Seattle and highlight police tactics such as the partitioning of space, and the strategic incapacitation and rearranging of demonstrators.

Keywords: Policing Protests; Space; Anti-war Demonstrations; Strategic Incapacitation; Washington, DC; Transgressive Protests

The US government has failed to recognize the interconnectedness of all the forms of violence. . . . Terror is still terror whether it is from death from starvation, fear of enslavement by corporations or fear of bombs or airplanes falling. . . . We will not hand over our civil liberties to the greater good of the State. . . . We strongly see the need to come together and act on our visions of the world we want to create and not on our fears. (ACC Call to Action, 20 September 2001)

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We're trying to be on guard because some people don't respect peace. (Washington, DC Assistant Police Chief Terrance Gainer, 2001)

Over the weekend of 29–30 September 2001, approximately 20,000 people demonstrated in Washington, DC in opposition to the widely anticipated United States military response to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. These demonstrations were, in many ways, substitute protests. A much larger series of demonstrations had been planned for this weekend, to coincide with the fall meetings of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). All indicators suggested there would be clashes between police and protesters during these demonstrations. The Mobilization for Global Justice (MGJ), an umbrella group of global justice movement organizations and the primary organizer of similar demonstrations in April 2000, was planning “large-scale, well-organized, high-visibility actions” in opposition to IMF/WB policies and practices (MGJ, 2001). MGJ warned participants to expect a large number of arrests and urged them to clear the week following the protest so they could engage in civil disobedience to fill Washington, DC's jails in protest at the projected criminalization of dissent (MGJ, 2001).

For their part, the Metropolitan Police (MPDC) moved to mobilize a massive security apparatus in anticipation of upwards of 100,000 demonstrators. Seeking to control the space near the WB and IMF headquarters, and following the lead of the Quebec police at the hotly contested April 2001 Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) meetings in Canada (Lochhead, 2001; Dejevsky, 2001), the MPDC announced plans to encircle 2.7 miles of central Washington, including the WB and IMF buildings and the White House, with a nine-foot high, galvanized steel fence (Montgomery, 2001). In addition, the MPDC planned to close down the campus of George Washington University, and had been working for several months to have police departments up and down the East Coast detail its off-duty officers to Washington for the weekend (Argetsinger, 2001).

However, the anticipated clash between global justice protesters and the MPDC never occurred. On 11 September, hijackers flew jets into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a Pennsylvania field killing thousands of people in the planes and the buildings they hit. In respect for the magnitude and historical significance of these attacks, many activist groups canceled their travel plans, and many protest groups (such as AFL-CIO, Friends of the Earth and Oxfam America) called off their plans to demonstrate. Other organizations announced scaled-down activities. MGJ, for example, called off their street demonstrations, but still planned to offer teach-ins and discussions on globalization (Gillham & Edwards, 2003). Most remaining protest organizations canceled their demonstrations after the IMF/WB, responding to an appeal from MPDC Chief Charles Ramsey, cancelled their autumn meetings altogether (Crutsinger, 2001; Edwards & Gillham 2003).

Two organizations—the local Anti-Capitalist Convergence (ACC) and the New York-based International Action Center (IAC)—decided to take advantage of the

planning they had done for the weekend and stage demonstrations on Saturday, 29 November, linking the cause of global justice to anti-militarism. A third group, the local Washington Peace Center (WPC), which had not planned to participate as an organization in the global justice protests, drew on its deep roots in the Washington area to stage a third demonstration on Sunday, 30 November. Because of the extraordinary set of events that shaped these demonstrations, the weekend was unique in many ways. Nonetheless, the MPDC drew from its standard repertoire of social control tactics in constructing its response to the weekend's demonstrations. This allows us to make connections to recent broader changes in the policing of protest. Moreover, there is much to be learned about the nature of police-protester relations by comparing the police response to the respective protests, each of which occurred in the same unique context.

In this article, we examine the MPDC response to these three protests, with particular attention being paid to the police efforts to control the space in which the demonstrations occurred. To systematically observe each demonstration, the authors established observation posts on the front-right and rear-left of the respective marches, with a third observer circulating in the middle section of each. We then moved with the march, noting events as they occurred and taking visual inventories at ten-minute intervals. The authors also interviewed protesters before, during and after the demonstrations. By relating these observations to recent discussions about changes in the nature of policing protest, we attempt to extend current theories of contentious politics to include recognition of the role of spatial contention.

We consider the literature on the policing of protest from the perspective of spatial dynamics in the next section. In recent years there has been increased attention to the nexus of space and, respectively, policing and social movements (cf. Herbert, 1997; DeFlem, 1996; Kraska & Kappeler, 1997; Tilly, 2000; Sewell, 2001), but, to the best that we can determine, there has not been a specific examination of the nexus of space and the policing of protest. Therefore, we first consider the implications of the existing literature on the policing of protest for questions of the struggle between police and protesters over spaces of contention. To aid in this task, we draw upon the separate literatures on the spatial dynamics of policing and the spatial dynamics of social movements. After this, we describe the three protests that occurred on the weekend of 29–30 September, and synthesize all of the preceding in an analysis of the MPDC's policing of these demonstrations.

The Policing of Protest in the United States

Spatial dynamics are central to both policing and protesting. The mobilization of social movements is facilitated by the availability of "safe spaces" outside the immediate control of the authorities in which dissenting points of view are tolerated, alternative ideas debated and oppositional ideologies formulated (Polletta, 1999; Zhao, 2000). Time-distance relations shape the mobilization process by making it more likely that some potential participants will mobilize and less likely others will do

so (Stillerman, 2003; Sewell, 2001). Tactical choices of march participants are shaped by the built environment and spatial routines in contested locales (Marston, 2003, Sewell, 2001). Moreover, by engaging in marches, sit-ins or pickets, social movement participants are making claims about the symbolic nature of the space in which the demonstrations occur, and about their right to occupy the space and disrupt its normal spatial routines (Marston, 2003; Tilly, 2000; Sewell, 2001).

Space is similarly important to the maintenance of social control. Daily life became more orderly and law enforcement more effective when frontiers were eliminated and the contiguous boundaries of the modern nation-state system were established (Elias, 1994; Gerth & Mills, 1944). Among other things, this facilitated a shift from the use of the threat of military force to enforce internal order to the internal pacification of the citizenry through policing (Fyfe, 1991; Giddens, 1981). Within nation-states, police continue to partition off space and assert their own spatial claims (Traugott, 1995). Modern-day police, Herbert (1997: 11) argues, “would be largely impotent without the capacity to create and enforce boundaries and to restrict people’s mobility in and around certain areas”.

Police and protesters, therefore, engage in several contests over spatial issues. Spaces are physically contested when protesters demonstrate or seek to demonstrate in them and police attempt to either restrict protester access to certain spaces or to disperse protesters from a space they already occupy. Yet spatial contention is a cultural as well as physical phenomenon. Symbolically important spaces, such as monuments or historically significant locales, become the site of intense contention, with protesters seeking to stake their claims in the most politically potent space while police seek to prevent the act as a means of both asserting their control over their jurisdictional space and preventing “off-the-job” trouble from politicians and others who oppose the protesters attempts to re-frame the meaning of the site (Waddington, 1999). Tarrow’s (1994) discussion of the “struggle for cultural supremacy” between states, social movements, counter-movements and media is relevant here (see also Noakes and Johnston, 2005; Sewell, 2001). Who defines the meaning of contested space is one aspect of this struggle.

Thus, the lack of any explicit discussion of spatial dynamics in the policing of protest represents a serious gap in the social science literature on this topic. That there is such a gap, however, is not surprising. It is only in recent years that the literatures on either policing in general or social movements have begun to incorporate spatial issues into their theoretical work. Sewell’s (2001: 51–52) observation that the social movement literature “has treated space as an assumed and unproblematized background, not as a constituent aspect of contentious politics that must be conceptualized explicitly and probed systematically” is applicable to the literature on the policing protests, as well (see also Stillerman, 2003; Marston, 2003; Tilly, 2000). Nonetheless, it is not difficult to re-cast the literature on the policing of protest in terms of spatial dynamics, despite the absence of explicit and systematic analyses of the role of space in the policing of protests.

We focus here on the policing of protest in the United States, though recent transformations in the policing of protest across Western democracies share some common qualities (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998). For most of the twentieth century, when protesters disrupted the spatial routines of factory floors or department store lunch counters, public and private police sought to assert their control of the contested space by the use of force. Labour, civil rights and other protest groups often found themselves beaten, shot at or arrested, as police exhibited little tolerance for protest group's attempts to assert even a temporary or symbolic claim to control spaces (cf. Barkan, 1984; Goldstein, 1978). Known in the sociological literature as the *escalated force* style of policing protest, these tactics lost considerable legitimacy in the United States during the 1960s protest cycle, denounced not only by protesters and civil libertarians, but also by the more mainstream public commissions established to study the crisis of public order. At the same time, police began searching for alternatives to the use of force during protests, concerned that the use of force—however they sought to justify it—only served to inflame crowds, increase the disruption of public order and raised questions about the legitimacy of police actions.

In the final quarter of the twentieth century, police developed a new, softer and seemingly more tolerant style of policing protest dubbed “negotiated management” by social scientists (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998; McPhail et al., 1998). This new style of policing protest was based on the premise that police could better achieve their two primary goals—minimizing public disorder and increasing the predictability of protest events—by ceding temporary and partial control of public spaces to demonstrators. Police would under-enforce the law and negotiate with protest groups prior to a demonstration in an effort to establish mutually agreeable terms and conditions under which the demonstrations would be held. To reach such an agreement, police would help protest groups cut through legal red tape, protect permit-holding protest groups from counter-demonstrators and ignore minor violations of the law during demonstrations in exchange for compromises from protesters on the route of the protest march or the location of a rally (McPhail et al., 1998; Waddington, 1998). Similarly, police would grant protester requests to stage potentially disruptive actions, such as blocking a busy intersection or rallying at a symbolically rich site, if protesters agreed in advance to limit its scope or duration (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998; Waddington, 1998).

The maximization of predictability such an agreement promised made the police role in controlling spaces of contention as much an exercise in directing traffic as one of regulating crowd behaviour. One result of this new strategy was that the use of arrests and force to disperse demonstrations decreased substantially (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998; McPhail et al., 1998). Waddington (1998: 118), for example, documents the formal policy of “[n]onarrest . . . adopted by senior officers and communicated to their officers through briefings” in London during the 1980s, and the resulting calmness of protests during that decade. McPhail et al. (1998), who stress the emergence of public order management systems in the United States, note the relative quiescence of protests during the 1980s and 1990s.

This literature suggests that the negotiated management style of policing protest is employed most often when protests consist primarily of *contained* contention, or demonstrations in which “all parties are previously established actors employing well established means of claim making” (Tilly, 2000: 138). It is under these conditions that an “air of cooperation” can be established between police and protesters, and police can be reasonably confident that the protest leaders will handle disruptive members of their group “at their own level, without getting the police involved” (Fisher, 2001; see also Marx, 1981). Thus, it is not surprising that the rise of the negotiated management style of policing protest in the 1980s coincided with the professionalization of many of the leading movement organizations that had survived the 1960s protest cycle. At this time, many of these groups sought to consolidate their gains by emphasizing pressure group politics and access to high-level policy discussions over street demonstrations. When these groups did hit the streets to apply pressure for their cause, they did so in well-planned, carefully arranged and fully permitted protest marches (Rootes, 1999).

A wave of small, more confrontational grassroots groups emerging in the late 1980s and early 1990s, however, exposed the weaknesses of the negotiated management approach. Distrustful of the priorities of established groups, offended by their paternalism toward local groups and frustrated by the growing ineffectiveness of protest politics to change policy, many of these groups adopted anarchist principles, rejecting the accommodationist style of larger, more professional groups on both a philosophical and a tactical level (Rootes, 1999; Wall, 1999; Kaufman, 2002). These “newly self-identified political actors” often employed tactics such as sit-ins, road blockades, traffic stoppages and lockdowns. These “innovative means of collective action . . . disrupt(ed) existing spatial routines . . . (and) involved the deliberate occupation, reorganization, or dramatization of public space” (Tilly, 2000: 138).

The disruptive potential of such *transgressive* contention was demonstrated at the “Battle in Seattle” during the 1999 meetings of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Conference. In preparation for the demonstrations, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) negotiated numerous agreements with established mainstream political groups who would be in Seattle to protest the policies of the WTO, including labour unions and major environmental movement organizations. The SPD, however, failed to reach agreement with the grassroots wing of the global justice movement, which refused to agree to severe limits on their protests. When these transgressive protesters¹ blockaded major intersections in downtown Seattle, police lost control of the area and the WTO was forced to cancel the opening day of its 1999 meeting (Cockburn et al., 2000; Gillham & Marx, 2000; Thomas, 2000).

The streets of downtown Seattle had been designated for use by both WTO delegates and global justice protesters, but once the police lost control of the streets to protesters, public officials took several steps to reassert their control over the downtown area, including declaring a civil emergency and mobilizing 200 National Guard troops. Under the powers granted by the emergency declaration, the SPD cordoned off a large area of the downtown and employed a variety of less-lethal

weapons to disperse demonstrators, including pepper spray, bean bag projectiles, tear gas, baton charges and concussion grenades (Gillham & Marx, 2000; SPD, 2000). Police officials have subsequently come to talk about Seattle in reverential terms—as a “watershed” event (Gainer, 2001a), “parallel,” one explained, to “Pearl Harbor to some degree” (Fisher, 2001). In the months after Seattle, police departments scrambled to learn its lessons, consulting with one another, viewing videotapes of disruptive protests, visiting cities where large protests were occurring, and attending FBI seminars on the new wave of mass protests and how to combat them (Beasley et al., 2000; Burgess, 2000).

Based on our review of the police response to several post-Seattle protests in the United States, we have argued elsewhere (Noakes & Gillham, 2004) that several police tactics have become central to the policing of protest in recent years:

- the establishment of extensive no protest zones, often by installing large concrete and metal fence barriers;
- the disruption of safe spaces, such as convergence centers where protesters would congregate to sleep, eat and acquire information;
- the use of less-lethal weapons to temporarily incapacitate protesters so police could retake control of spaces of contention;
- the use of electronic surveillance technology to increase the transparency of spaces of contention and provide real-time information on demonstrators activities to police; and
- pre-emptive arrests to reorganize leaders and large numbers of protesters.

These tactics, each of which has a spatial component to it, provide a broad context for our comparison of the police response to the demonstrations on the weekend of 29–30 September 2001. As noted above, police preparations for the global justice protest scheduled for this weekend included erecting of a large security fence around a substantial no-protest zone, recruiting of extra police personnel, and the shutting down of the campus of George Washington University, where police feared “safe spaces” could be established. The anti-war protests of 29–30 September were significantly smaller than the cancelled global justice protests had promised to be. They were also less confrontational than the WTO protests and the post-Seattle protests referred to above. In each of the anti-war protests analyzed here, the sponsoring groups announced they would not engage in disruptive protests and police negotiated the march route prior to each demonstration (though, as we will discuss, the ACC did not talk directly with the police, but instead used the National Lawyer’s Guild as an intermediary).

The Protesters and the Demonstrations

Numerous organizations had been planning for several months to participate in mass demonstrations in Washington, DC on the weekend of 29–30 September when the 9/11 terrorist attacks fundamentally altered the nature and purpose of the weekend.

Both ACC and IAC drew immediate links between global justice and anti-militarism by protesting the imminent American military strikes against Afghanistan, where the al Qaeda leadership was based. ACC is an umbrella group of anarchist, communist and socialist groups in the greater Washington, DC area formed in 2001 to protest the IMF/WB meetings (ACC, 2001). Though they admitted they were “uncomfortable carrying forth in the way we planned” after the events of 9/11, they insisted that it was now even more important that the global justice movement “come together and act on our visions of the world we want to create and not on our fears”. For ACC (2001), the decision to demonstrate was based on the conviction that war and terrorism were inextricably linked. “Until we understand the violence of our economic, military, and foreign policies,” it declared on its website, “we will continue to foster the conditions that make . . . terrorism possible.”

Joining ACC on the streets of the American capital that day was the New York-based IAC, founded in 1992 by former Attorney General Ramsey Clark to oppose American imperialism. While acknowledging the desire among many to “take time to reflect, to grieve, to extend sympathy and condolences to all,” IAC argued that planned military action in Afghanistan represented an immediate and deeply troubling example of global injustice that required that global justice protesters “do more” and “act now” (ANSWER, 2001). To coordinate its efforts, IAC announced on 14 September 2001 the formation of an antiwar coalition named Act Now to Stop War and End Racism (ANSWER). The ANSWER steering committee included groups opposed to American foreign policy in the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia and South America, and groups confronting oppression in the United States as well (ANSWER, 2001).

After the focus of the weekend shifted from global justice to anti-militarism, a third group, the locally based Washington Peace Coalition (WPC), announced plans to hold a protest on Sunday, 30 September. Officially formed in 1963, the WPC was active in anti-nuclear movements of the 1970s, the Central America and Middle East solidarity movements of the 1980s and the opposition to American militarism in Iraq in the early 1990s. With Quaker roots, WPC works “to engender a more peace-filled world” and stresses opposition to “all forms of oppression and the violence inherent in these whether based on race, class, gender or sexual orientation” (WPC, 2004). Though WPC had not planned to participate as an organization in the global justice protests originally scheduled for the weekend of 29–30 September, its deep roots in the Washington, DC area peace movement allowed it to mobilize several thousand protesters on short notice.

The ACC March

Participants in the ACC march began gathering at 9 am on Saturday, 29 September in a park near Union Station. ACC had not obtained a permit for their march and held no direct negotiations with the MPDC, though National Lawyer Guild (NLG) representatives negotiated on their behalf a march route from the gathering place to

Edward R. Murrow Park, adjacent to the World Bank (Fernandez & Dvorak, 2001). The route of the ACC march focused attention on its objection to global capitalism as well as American military action, as did many of the chants and banners observed during the demonstration.

Participants in the ACC march were, by and large, the youngest of the three marches that weekend and the most overtly radical. Those interviewed by the authors drew direct connections between their support of the global justice movement and their opposition to the war. One 26 year-old white male from Wisconsin, suggested "if we don't have a pull up system, where we start raising the conditions of Third World countries, then we're going to have [terrorists attacks] all the time". Another protester, a 20 year-old female from Washington State argued "we're against a whole . . . theory of how people see the world". Nonetheless, in a concession to the sensitivity of the moment, the ACC announced that its members would not engage in the type of militant actions they had been planning for the demonstrations against the WB and IMF.

Despite ACC's public announcement that they would not be militant, the MPDC prepared for a confrontation with a group they saw as akin to the Black Bloc. There was a heavy police presence prior to the march, and there appeared to be nearly as many police officers as protesters at the gathering site. Moreover, dozens of officers in full riot gear were visible and in close proximity to demonstrators during the pre-march rally, during which an American flag was ceremoniously burned, but no speeches were made. After a short standoff in response to a police order to disband or risk arrest for unlawful assembly, police and intermediaries from the NLG negotiated an agreement that allowed an un-permitted march to proceed on a carefully agreed upon route.

At approximately 10 am, when the lead group of demonstrators, most dressed in black clothing and wearing bandanas across their faces, made half-hearted attempts to bolt down streets not part of the negotiated march route, rows of MPDC officers clad in riot gear and carrying batons twice rebuffed them. When the marchers finally started upon the agreed upon route, MPDC officers dressed in body armour lined both curbs and the demonstration moved briskly through the street of Washington. At federal sites along the route, Secret Service, Park Police and Capitol Police (all clad in riot gear), provided additional reinforcement.

The MPDC lines were relatively porous at the beginning of the march, with police allowing demonstrators and bystanders to move on and off the street as they pleased. Police seemed uncertain about what they should be doing, especially at one point when the mostly young crowd began to run, forcing the police, weighed down by their riot gear, to march in double time to keep up. Commanders shouted orders to the officers, who appeared more confused than angry.

The tone of the march changed, however, near its mid-point when a scuffle broke out between police and a small group of protesters surrounding an MPDC cruiser. The cruiser, which had been at the front of the march from its inception, had inexplicably slowed down and been engulfed by demonstrators near the intersection

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of 11th and H streets. Police moved quickly to disperse demonstrators from the area near the cruiser and a police officer wielding a pepper spray canister emerged suddenly from the cruiser to scatter persistent protesters; at least three demonstrators and one police official were hit by the pepper spray. The highest-ranking MPDC officer on the scene explained the incident as follows:

We were trying to assist one of our officers who was being hemmed in by the protesters. During that small little melee . . . someone reached over and hit me on the head with a pole. Some of our other officers were spraying trying to get the protesters away from the front of the car. It was not significant by any stretch but it was disruptive. (Gainer, 2001b)

After a few more minutes of jockeying between police and protesters, the incident ended and the march continued (Fernandez & Dvorak, 2001).

However, the “disruptive” scuffle changed the tenor of MPDC tactics. Police officers lining the street began barring entrance to or exit from the march route, and when the march reached Edward R. Murrow Park, there was a short standoff between police clad in riot gear holding pepper spray canisters and black-clad protesters wearing bandanas. After about ten minutes of chanting, however, demonstrators began to back off, only to find that MPDC officers on motorcycles, Park Police officers on horseback and Capitol Police in riot gear had shut off all exit points from the park. Police detained the demonstrators in a two-block area demarcated by metal barricades for nearly two hours. Only after further negotiations with the NLG did the MPDC agree to release the corralled protesters and only by means of a carefully controlled march in which ACC protesters were moved *en masse* to the IAC rally several blocks away. Once again, MPDC officers in full body armour lined both sides of the route, using large sticks pressed against the back of protesters to establish and maintain the boundaries of the march. Refusing exit from or entry to the body of demonstrators, they physically rebuffed any demonstrators who challenged these boundaries.

The IAC Protest

The ANSWER rally, sponsored by the IAC, began at 12 noon in Freedom Park, a few blocks from the White House.² Speakers were numerous and diverse, including Ramsey Clark, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) injured at the World Trade Center, international activists, students, queer/trans activists, labour activists and feminists, among others. A permitted march from Freedom Park to Upper Senate Park, adjacent to the Capitol, followed with IAC monitors actively directing marchers to keep off sidewalks and stay on the designated route. The IAC march was the weekend’s largest. The 10,000 or so marchers were a mix of young and middle aged and mostly white, though this march had a larger percentage of people of colour than the other two protest events that weekend.

Much like the ACC protesters, participants in the IAC march linked the causes of global justice and anti-militarism. "There's no McDonald's," one 40 year-old female told us, "without McDonald-Douglas." Marchers also linked the impending war and racism. Approximately forty members of the Bread and Puppets troupe sought to symbolize the racism of the American military's bombing of people of colour by performing a roving "bread-not-bombs" performance while holding life-size paper-mache puppets representing Afghani citizens.

From its inception, there had been a highly visible police presence during the IAC rally. At approximately 1:10 pm, the ACC marchers and the police escorting them arrived. The police formed a semi-circle around the back end of the rally, placing a buffer between the protesters and the White House, several blocks to the Northwest. With the crowd at the IAC rally applauding their arrival, the ACC march participants merged comfortably into the rally.

At the end of the rally, the crowd smoothly transitioned into the march towards Capitol Hill. A variety of agencies participated in the policing of the IAC march route down Pennsylvania Avenue, including the MPDC, the Park Police and the Secret Service. MPDC officers in riot gear were particularly evident, with squads of a dozen or so blocking several intersections along the parade route. The police, however, made little effort to confine the marchers to the street, allowing demonstrators considerable freedom of movement, including uninhibited access to the sidewalk, despite the presence of counter demonstrators at one point on the route and the passing of numerous government buildings.

Although visible to all marchers, the police officers in riot gear seemed to serve no real spatial control function during the march. The intersections they blocked were not particularly important ones, nor did the police prevent the occasional demonstrator from passing them to move down one of these cross streets. Several times we observed police watch passively as one or two protesters exited the march route. We do not know, however, what would have occurred if a large segment of the march had veered off course. Though the law enforcement presence was visible and large, police kept a greater distance from demonstrators than they had during the ACC march and seemed to be more at ease, as well. We observed numerous officers in full body armour with their helmets off. When the IAC marchers reached their destination, police remained in the background as IAC marshals directed protesters into Upper Senate Park. Over the next hour or so, the marchers mingled casually and exchanged stories from the march, dispersing at their own pace. Many walked to the nearby Metro train station.

The WPC March

The Washington Peace Center (WPC) rally began on Sunday, 30 September at 11 am at Meridian Hill Park, known popularly in the city as Malcolm X Park; it included religious leaders, Kurdish activists and a widow of an officer killed in the Pentagon attack, among others. The march, which began at 12:30 pm, wound its way through

several nearby neighbourhoods, stopping at a small park in Sheridan Circle to join an ongoing Kurdish vigil located at the scene of a recent racist attack. The participants in the march were the oldest and most conservatively dressed of the three marches. While the WPC utilized parade marshals, they were less aggressive in their role than those at the larger IAC march had been.

Many of those we interviewed at the WPC march had planned on participating in the cancelled global justice protests and had been at least one of the previous day's protests. Much like protesters the previous day, they drew clear links between the anti-war and global justice causes, but this protest also included many who had been mobilized by more recent and specific events. A 29 year-old white male, who hoped the demonstrations might lead to a "little more humane, more effective" American foreign policy, admitted he was "still educating" himself on global justice issues and had not been involved in global justice protests. Similarly, a 36 year-old white female reported she "wasn't sure" if she would have been at the cancelled global justice protests, explaining: "What happened on (September) 11th is what really got me motivated."

Police remained at a respectful distance during the rally and march. As its official name suggests, Malcolm X Park sits up on a small hill, and police, for the most part, remained on the back streets around the park during the rally, largely invisible to attendees. When the march hit the streets, the police escort included only several officers at the front of the march and a single Department of Justice official. Single officers were posted at cross streets to block traffic and encourage the march to stay on its negotiated route, but demonstrators were free to move from the street to the sidewalk exiting or entering the march and often engaged with bystanders as they passed them, distributing flyers and encouraging them to join the demonstration and occasionally stopping in convenience stores along the march route for snacks and beverages. The only exception to the light policing was the shadowing of a small anarchist group by police on motorcycles, but this surveillance was isolated in space and specific in purpose.

Just as during the marches the day before, there were police in riot gear and armoured personnel carriers present at the WPC march. As the march left Dupont Circle for its final leg, for example, we observed 18 police cruisers, two armoured personnel carriers and several empty buses tailing the demonstrators. However, the MPDC kept the riot gear out of sight of most protesters. At an interim rally point at Sheridan Circle, for example, police formed a loose circle around the rally and a single Secret Service agent surveilled a side street lined with foreign embassies. About a block from the rally, 25 Park Police officers in full riot gear gathered in a residential neighbourhood, available if needed, but well hidden from the demonstrators.

Overall, the policing of the movements of participants and observers was more relaxed in this march than the previous two. Whereas in the ACC march, journalists photographing the march were being pushed off of trash cans by police, in the WPC march, police ignored a black-clad protester who climbed a six-foot pole and several protesters with anarchist flags who mounted a statue of a horse at Sheridan Circle for

a photo-opportunity. Moreover, MPDC Chief Ramsey casually dispensed sound-bites to journalists while strolling in front of the march. He summarized his view of the weekend of demonstrations by saying: "A few minor incidents . . . occurred yesterday with people in the unpermitted march, but other than that it has been a pretty peaceful event" (Ramsey, 2001).

Discussion

Spatial analyses of policing emphasize police practices such as surveillance, the partitioning of a police force's jurisdiction into sectors for bureaucratic purposes or the policing of different kinds of space (cf. Herbert, 1997; Fyfe, 1991). Spatial analyses of social movements tend to focus on the adaptation of potential grievants and social movement organizations to existing spatial constraints or opportunities, emphasizing how the built environment shapes the construction of demonstrations or the choice of tactics, how time-space relations effect mobilization, or the importance or safe spaces to the development of alternative ideologies (Tilly, 2000; Sewell, 2001; Marston, 2003; Stillerman, 2003). A spatial analysis of the policing of protest must examine not merely the geography of policing or simply the nexus of space and social movements, but spatial contention between police and social movements. In other words, it must seek to explain how spatial dynamics affect the interaction between police and protesters, and their simultaneous struggle to occupy and bestow meaning on contested spaces during demonstrations.

Consider, for example, Marston's (2003: 230) argument that "the streets literally shapes the construction of the public speech of a parade" or Stillerman's (2003: 65) assertion that the "built environment and everyday spatial routines . . . influence activists' tactical repertoires". Such insights are limited in their understanding of how negotiations with police shape numerous aspects of most parades or demonstrations, including how views will be expressed and which demonstration tactics can be used. In those cases in which social movement groups do not negotiate with police beforehand, or cannot reach an agreement with them on the scale, scope and nature of an event, the police tend to aggressively assert control over public space.

A spatial analysis of the policing of protest, therefore, needs to focus on concepts such as police knowledge, or how police "construct external reality, collectively and individually", including their diagnosis of protesters, their tactics and their motives (Della Porta & Reiter, 1998: 9; see also Winter, 1998). As one of the assistant chiefs responsible for planning the MPDC's response to the 29–30 September 2001 protests explained, this diagnosis is informed in large part by the "history of the groups protesting" (Broadbent, 2002). In other words, police respond differently to demonstrations based on their assessment of the risk posed by protesters (Fillieule & Jobard, 1998; Jaime-Jimenez & Reinares, 1998; Waddington, 1998, 1999).

For the purposes of this discussion, we will look at our three cases with reference to a continuum of risk that runs from *contained* at one extreme to *transgressive* at the other (Tilly, 2000). Contained protests are staged by political actors who: are well

known to the police; obtain permits for their protests and negotiate the scale, scope and nature of their demonstrations with the police in advance; who employ familiar tactics; and who self-police their demonstrations to discourage any acts that would violate the group's agreement with the police. Other aspects of a protest group's profile can affect how the police perceive them. All other things being equal, the older and more middle-class a group, the more likely they are to be perceived as low risk. Similarly, the less diffuse and abstract a group's political positions are, the more trustworthy they appear to police (Della Porta, 1998; Waddington 1998, 1999). In contrast, transgressive protest groups are those who: are unfamiliar to the police or have established a reputation for disruptive behaviour; are unable or unwilling to reach agreement with police prior to a demonstration; employ innovative tactics that they do not reveal in advance to police; or are deemed likely to challenge police control of public space and engage in direct action tactics. Police also read certain characteristics as possible indications of transgressiveness. "Bad" protesters include: professional protesters; those seen as pursuing abstract, diffuse or radical goals; and young protesters, who are believed to be ill-informed and easily manipulated by others (Fillieule & Jobard, 1998; Jaime-Jimenez & Reinares, 1998; Waddington, 1999). In order to assess the three demonstrations under scrutiny, we first place the sponsoring organizations on the continuum just discussed. We then show how the MPDC utilized different strategies to control each group, and conclude by noting two ironies that emerged from the policing activities.

The WPC is a prototypical contained protest group. Most importantly, the WPC is a local group with over thirty years of history with the MPDC. True to its pacifist commitment rooted in Quakerism, in previous protests the WPC had been cooperative with police and had never engaged in violence or the destruction of property. As it had in the past, the WPC negotiated with the MPDC prior to the 30 September demonstration. In addition, the demonstrators at the WPC march were, overall, also older and more middle-class in appearance than those at either of the Saturday marches. In fact, many of the protesters were dressed for church, having come straight from services to the demonstration. Finally, the political message of the WPC march was more narrowly targeted on peace and anti-militarism than either of the previous day's marches. The relevance of this is made clear in a statement made to reporters by the second in command of the MPDC during the WPC march. Asked to assess the weekend of demonstration, Terrance Gainer said: "I think they keep improving with time, more peaceful and more focused" (Gainer, 2001b). In sum, the MPDC appeared confident it could trust the WPC to self-police its demonstration.

If WPC is the prototypical contained protest group, the Anti-Capitalist Convergence is a prototypical transgressive group. Young and defiant, ACC had aligned itself philosophically with the groups that used innovative and confrontational tactics to disrupt events during previous demonstrations in Washington, DC. Moreover, they acted the part of transgressive protesters. A large contingent at the front of the march was dressed in the black clothes and face-covering bandanas of the Black Bloc, the most disruptive and least contained of the various groups at recent

global justice demonstrations. ACC's unwillingness to obtain a permit for the demonstration on 29 September reinforced this perception, notwithstanding ACC's statements made to the contrary concerning this specific event and NLG representation in on-the-spot negotiations.

The reputation of the IAC sits somewhere between these two groups, though slightly more toward the contained end of the continuum. The demonstration was officially sponsored by ANSWER, the auxiliary to IAC established just a few weeks earlier. ANSWER is based in New York City, so there was little chance for relationships with the MPDC to develop. As a result, ANSWER's reputation with the MPDC was based on its willingness to apply a permit to demonstrate on 29 September (which was issued) and its links to IAC, its parent organization. IAC's political reputation is mixed, but it leans toward the contained end of the continuum. Professionally organized, with ties to former establishment figures such as Ramsey Clark, and interested in assuming a leadership role in the emerging anti-war movement, IAC had several reasons to cooperate with police. The presence of numerous and active march marshals visible throughout the demonstration is evidence that IAC took their self-policing role seriously. In addition, many of the demonstrators bussed in from New York City and elsewhere were older and appeared to be more middle-class than the participants in the ACC march. However, IAC also has a reputation for controversial political positions on a range of foreign policy issues, reflected in the speeches given at the 29 September rally and the banners carried by march participants.

Police and protesters have always struggled over access to space and over the meaning of specific spaces, but the nature of these struggles is not always the same. Over the past thirty years, during the negotiated management era, struggles over both access to and the meaning of spaces of contention had more often than not been resolved behind closed doors during negotiations between police and protest organizers prior to an event rather than on the streets during an event. Our observations indicate that the MPDC contested the claims of the only truly transgressive group, the ACC, in public rather than private. As the assessed risk of the group decreased, the police settled spatial issues in private. The primary struggles between the IAC and WPC over spatial matters took place behind close doors and prior to the weekend of 29–30 September. Both groups were considered more or less trustworthy—and, therefore, contained—by the MPDC. In contrast, the MPDC deemed ACC's demonstration as risky based on an assessment of their ideology and tactics in past protests, and the ideology and tactics of groups like the Black Bloc, who the MPDC closely associated with the ACC. The MPDC, therefore, aggressively sought to contain the ACC's by dominating the space in which their demonstration took place. Three key tactics of the MPDC's domination can be identified: the partitioning of space, the rearranging of protesters and the strategic incapacitation of demonstrators.

By the partitioning of space we mean the erecting of physical barriers to deny demonstrators to specific areas. As we noted earlier, the MPDC had originally

planned to erect a tall and extensive physical barrier to partition off a significant portion of the city from demonstrators, a common practice since the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle. After the IMF/WB protests were cancelled, the MPDC scaled back these plans and cordoned off a smaller area of the nation's capital with a much shorter fence. However, the MPDC successfully managed to use a combination of these smaller barriers and police officers in riot gear to partition off ACC participants during their unpermitted march to the park adjacent to the World Bank, for two hours after the demonstrators reached the park, and then during the forced march from the World Bank to the IAC rally. This is in clear contrast to the MPDC's response to IAC and, in particular, WPC. In both these marches, the MPDC allowed demonstrators to permeate march borders. This was particularly noticeable during the WPC march, where there was often only a single police officer on a motorcycle at intersections and most protesters—with the exception of the small band of anarchists who had their own police escort—enjoyed unlimited access to the sidewalks, local businesses and the audience watching the demonstration.

The forced march of ACC protesters to the IAC rally also illustrates another common tactic in recent years—the rearranging of protesters. Generally, the rearrangement of demonstrators involves diluting demonstrations by keeping specified groups of potential protesters away from the primary action. At first glance, the merging of ACC and IAC demonstrators seems to make little sense because police risked contaminating a contained demonstration with transgressive protesters, but the MPDC was not about to simply let the ACC protesters out of the makeshift corral and let them roam the streets of Washington, potentially causing havoc for the police in numerous ways. By marching the ACC to the IAC march they concentrated the vast majority of the protesters on the streets of DC that day in one place. This served two purposes. First, it seems likely the IAC would closely monitor the behaviour of ACC activists in order to prevent them from taking over the rally and march. The marshals helping to self-police IAC demonstrators would do the same with ACC members. Second, by merging the ACC with the IAC police were also reuniting the majority of MPDC officers assigned to protest duty that day in one place, as well.

Finally, the previously described pepper spray incident during the ACC march provides an illustration of strategic incapacitation. Pepper spray, the most frequently used type of less-lethal weapons employed by police, includes a highly concentrated resin derived from cayenne that temporarily disables a target by causing intense pain, irritation of the eyes, swelling of the throat, temporary paralysis of the larynx, and loss of vision and balance (Cook et al., 1994; Jett, 1997; Wood, 2000). The most serious effects of pepper spray last only about an hour, after which nearly all people make a full and speedy recovery (Jett, 1997; Zollman et al., 2000). When police employ less-lethal weapons to temporarily disable protesters, they render them easier to disperse and allow the police to assert control of contested spaces without risking casualties. In this case, the MPDC was able to defuse a potentially volatile situation by strategically incapacitating those near the police cruiser. This represents the best-case

scenario for the use of less-lethal weapons. The brief rally by demonstrators near the police cruiser suggests the potential worst-case scenario. In Seattle in 1999, where protesters come to see the use of less-lethal weapons as an act of police violence, they incited resistance and escalated the intensity of clashes between police and protesters (Cockburn et al., 2000; Gillham & Marx, 2000).

Two ironies related to the MPDC's tactics stand out (Gillham & Marx, 2000). First, the only clashes between police and protesters that weekend occurred not because protesters sought to disrupt the space in which the World Bank, the Pentagon or other symbols of their opposition to capitalism and American foreign and trade policies, but rather because the ACC challenged the restrictive boundaries imposed by the MPDC during their demonstration. In many respects, the MPDC's tactics transformed the demonstrations from protests against capitalism, global injustice and American foreign policy to contests over space and police tactics to control them. The second irony relates to the struggle over the meaning of space. Following the "minor melee" during the ACC march discussed above, the marchers nearest the incident began to chant "Whose Streets? Our Streets!" The MPDC quickly rendered this chant mere rhetoric by restricting access to and from the demonstration, corralling the marchers in a two-block area for two hours, and then forcing the demonstrators to leave the park and walk several blocks to the IAC rally. As MPDC Chief Charles Ramsey explained, the MPDC actions were a response to the demonstrators' attempts "to breach our lines . . . we just cannot allow traffic flow and other things like that to be interrupted" (Ramsey, 2001). When police employ strategic incapacitation tactics during demonstrations, symbolic victories by protesters are signals to the police that it is time to incapacitate protesters.

Conclusion

There are important differences in the MPDC response to the three anti-war protests staged the weekend of 29–30 September 2001. The more transgressive the historic tactics and ideology of the group sponsoring the demonstration, the more aggressively the MPDC attempted to control the space in which the demonstration occurred. We observed police tactics for maintaining control of spaces of contention ranging from negotiated management to strategic incapacitation. The tensest struggles occurred during the ACC march in response to the MPDC's employment of strategic incapacitation tactics. Our observations of the event show that the clashes between police and protesters were sparked by the MPDC's attempts to control the spaces of contention, not ACC's attempts to employ transgressive tactics or disrupt public space. This suggests that spatial dynamics are shaped by factors related to the relationship between police and protesters, particularly police expectations of disorder. The irony is that strategic incapacitation tactics may create tension between police and protesters, and police expectations of transgressiveness may become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Notes

- [1] Here, we refer primarily not to the infamous “Black Bloc”, the small band of anarchists believed to have broken the storefront windows of multinational chain stores and engaged in other acts of vandalism on the periphery of the global justice demonstrations, but rather to groups such as those affiliated with the loose network of protesters known as the “Direct Action Network (DAN)”, which eschewed violence and the destruction of property.
- [2] Originally planned for Lafayette Park, directly across from the White House, the rally location was changed for security reasons after 9/11.

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