Beyond Militarization and Repression: Liberal Social Control as Pacification

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Abstract

This article will argue that the concepts of repression and militarization are inadequate tools for a radical critique of the targeted and selective application of coercion and consent in efforts to (re)produce a liberal capitalist order. The article will first of all show how liberal social control is best understood as uneven processes of pacification targeting specific individuals, groups and populations through a combination of coercion and consent. Secondly, the article will examine historical and current efforts to control protest through the lens of pacification. The analytic of pacification will then be applied to broader trends in US social control. Last but not least, the article will show that the apparently technical distinctions that allow for the targeted application of coercion and/or consent frequently reflect and reinforce existing societal divisions along the lines of race, class and gender.

Keywords

crime control, militarization, pacification, repression, social control, state violence

Introduction

Recent events in Ferguson, Missouri, a small town of just under 22,000 inhabitants in the greater St Louis metropolitan area, have come to expose the authoritarianism and violence inherent in liberal social control. On the one hand, events in Ferguson speak to African Americans' almost routine experience of state coercion and even violence; at the same time, these events also highlight the growing militarization of US police in general and the militarization of protest policing in particular. This article will show that liberal social control is best understood as uneven processes of pacification that target specific individuals, groups and populations in particular ways – processes of pacification that encompass both the everyday policing of the racialized poor and efforts to manage protest.

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The fatal shooting of Michael Brown, a young African American man, by Darren Wilson, a white police officer, in Ferguson on 9 August 2014 sparked widespread protests as well as acts of vandalism and looting that lasted for more than a week (*The New York Times*, 2014). On 24 November a grand jury decided not to bring criminal charges against Darren Wilson (Davey and Bosman, 2014). This controversial decision sparked numerous protests – not just in Ferguson but also in other major US cities. Well before the grand jury decision was announced, Ferguson and the state of Missouri had been preparing for another round of massive civil unrest (Bosman and Davey, 2014). On 17 November 2014, Governor of the State of Missouri, Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon, declared a state of emergency for the whole state of Missouri and activated the National Guard in anticipation of further protests (Nixon, 2014).

The police response to the initial protests against the shooting of Michael Brown led to major criticisms about the massive deployment of military-type gear and tactics. In fact, many commenters remarked that the images from Ferguson were more reminiscent of a war zone than a small American town (*Democracy Now*, 2014). The policing of the Ferguson unrest prompted a major debate about the militarization of American police. The Obama administration even ordered a review of the policy to equip local police departments with military-grade gear, such as body armor, assault rifles, armored personnel carriers, etc. (Schmidt, 2014).[1] In a press statement, President Obama (2014) stressed the significance of a clear distinction between the military and the police:

> Well, I think one of the great things about the United States has been our ability to maintain a distinction between our military and domestic law enforcement. That helps preserve our civil liberties. That helps ensure that the military is accountable to civilian direction. And that has to be preserved.

But has the United States really been able 'to maintain a distinction between the military and the police'? The increasing transfer of military-type equipment and tactics as well as militarized forms of organization and a militarized culture and language to civilian police departments is well documented (American Civil Liberties Union, 2014; Becker and Schulz, 2011; Balko, 2006; Haggerty and Ericson, 1999; Kraska and Kappeler, 1997; Kraska, 1999, 2007; Warren, 2004).

On the other hand, there is widespread consensus amongst social movement scholars that protest policing has overall become less violent since the early 1970s. Not only in the United States but also in most of Western Europe, protest policing strategies are held to have shifted from a coercive 'escalated force' strategy to a much more consensual and selective strategy of 'negotiated management' (McPhail et al., 1998; McPhail and McCarthy, 2005; Soule and Davenport, 2009). So why has protest policing become less violent at roughly the same time as police seemed to gear up for war? This article will argue that this apparent contradiction can be resolved when we conceptualize liberal public order policing in particular and liberal social control in general in terms of 'pacification'.

This article will argue that liberal social control is best understood as a form of pacification targeting specific populations, individuals and spaces. First of all, an analytic of pacification allows us to conceptualize the highly selective allocation of coercive and consensual social control. Secondly, by showing that the militarization of social control involves more than just the transfer of gear, tactics and organizational forms from the military to the police, the concept of pacification helps us better understand the convergence of warfare and police in contemporary liberal social control. Indeed, the overlap between war and police is far more insidious than the conventional big-guns narrative of militarization allows for (Neocleous, 2013: 8–9). Thirdly, the concept of pacification offers a more nuanced understanding of attempts to control social movement activity than the concept of repression. Many social movement scholars draw on Charles Tilly's (1978:

100) definition of repression as 'any action by another group which raises the contender's cost of collective action'. Yet, the concept of 'repression' overemphasizes the constraints put on collective action. The concept of 'pacification', in contrast, also highlights efforts to produce undisruptive and unthreatening forms of collective action through a combination of coercion and consent.

Some scholars have tried to move beyond repression in their analyses of protest control in particular and social control in general. Starr, Fernandez and Scholl (2011: 9–10), for instance, point out that the concept of counterinsurgency 'has been strikingly absent from the literature on social control and social movements [and] must be introduced to this discourse'. But they fail to further explicate the significance of counterinsurgency for the study of social control and social movements. Moreover, Starr et al. do not seem to have a clear idea of what counterinsurgency means and seem to confuse it with counterintelligence.[2] Kristian Williams's (2011) article 'The Other Side of the COIN' makes a much more cogent effort to apply a counterinsurgency analytic to the study of domestic social control. Last but not least, Mark Neocleous (2011a, 2011b, 2011c, 2013) has repeatedly shown how the concept of pacification can be used to mount an effective critique of liberal security. This article is indebted to and builds on these previous studies, but will nonetheless seek to move the concept into new directions – both theoretically and empirically.

The article will first of all show how liberal social control is best understood as uneven processes of pacification targeting specific individuals, groups and populations in particular ways. Secondly, the article will examine the development of protest control in the United States since the 1960s in terms of pacification. It will then apply the analytic of pacification to broader trends in US social control. Last but not least, the article will show that the apparently technical distinctions that allow for the targeted application of coercion and/or consent frequently reflect and reinforce existing societal divisions along the lines of race, class and gender.

Liberal Security and the Production of Social Order

By and large, the scholarly analysis of security is guided by a central dichotomy between internally pacified state territory where social control is above all enforced by the police, and the sphere of international relations where at least a semblance of security is provided by the military (see Bigo, 2008: 15; Kienscherf, 2013: 13–20; Neocleous, 2011b: 192; and Walker, 1993, for a critique of this dichotomy). The dichotomy of life inside a political community and relations between such communities and the concomitant distinction between domestic social control and international security is anchored in the principle of state sovereignty. So what is state sovereignty? Sovereignty is one of the many social scientific concepts that is frequently used but rarely if ever defined. This article is no exception – it will not attempt to define what sovereignty is, but only point out what it does. Sovereignty does two interrelated things. First of all, state sovereignty consists in the capacity to declare exceptions to given legal norms (Agamben, 1995, 2005; Schmitt, 1996). Secondly, and this is inextricably intertwined with the first point, sovereignty constantly (re)draws the boundaries between who belongs to a given political community and who is (often violently) excluded from political life (Walker, 1993). But liberal security is about more than centralized state sovereignty. Security does not just operate through centralized sovereign decisions but also through everyday administrative routines (Bigo, 2008; Bigo and Tsoukala, 2008; Huysmans, 2011). Moreover, the boundaries between who is held to belong to and who is excluded from a political community do not necessarily coincide with territorial state borders. In fact, physical as well as symbolic borders between conflicting groups and associated inequities also crisscross nation-state territory. So, in order to gain a critical purchase on liberal security, we have to examine how security plays out beyond the dichotomies between the normal and the exceptional, and the inside and the outside. In other words, if we want to critique liberal security we have to decenter state sovereignty.

In his analysis of power, Michel Foucault – perhaps more than any other thinker – sought to move beyond the perspective of centralized state sovereignty (Neal, 2004; Pasquino, 1993). He, first of all, sought to supplant a juridical-sovereign notion of centralized political power with a conception of power as continuous struggle. Indeed, in his early writings on political power, Foucault sought to inscribe the supposed features of relations between states – contingency, conflict and violence – into the domestic, or rather domesticated, sphere. This is the famous, or infamous, political-power-as-permanent warfare thesis: the inversion of Clausewitz (Foucault, 2003: 15). Yet, it seems as if Foucault looked into the abyss of politics as permanent warfare, and pulled back (see Hansen, 2000). For, in his later work, he sought to move both beyond the juridical-sovereign conception of power and his own bellicose notion of power, in order to study political power in terms of *government* (Dean, 2013, 1999). Foucault defined government as a whole range of efforts to intervene in and shape somebody else's conduct, or in his own words (2000: 341), 'to structure the possible field of action of others'.

In fact, Foucault (2000: 340) tried to distinguish between violence, which turns subjects into objects who are condemned to passivity, and government, which acts upon subjects who have the capacity to (re)act. However, this apparently neat distinction misses the fact that threats and/or displays of violence may well provide the very conditions of possibility for actions upon the actions of others. Liberal social control constantly slides from quotidian administrative routines to the use of force, and all the way back again. In short, liberal social control plays out across the full coercion-persuasion spectrum. For instance, the control of social movements is not just about tear-gassing, baton-charging and arresting protestors, but also about the institutionalization and co-optation of protest. Yet, the use of force is more than just a last resort – force always supports and enables other more beneficent means for acting upon the actions of others, even if it remains an unspoken threat.

To be better able to pinpoint the relations between government and violence in liberal security, we should look at who the targets of liberal social control are. And in order to do so we have to take a very brief detour through the overall logic of liberal rule. Liberal thought emerged as a critique of the science of police (*Polizeiwissenschaft*). The science of police, which covered a much broader field than what we now understand by the term police, was based on an attempt 'to promote the happiness of society by deploying state and non-state agencies to regulate all forms of behaviour' (Hindess, 2005: 394). The science of police envisioned a practice of government that 'does not limit its action on the governed to the general form of laws: it works by the means of specific, detailed regulation and decree' (Gordon, 1991: 10; see also Dean, 2000; Knemayer, 1980). As Foucault (2007: 313) put it:

> From the seventeenth century 'police' begins to refer to the set of means by which the state's forces can be increased while preserving the state in good order. In other words, 'police' will be the calculation and technique that will make it possible to establish a mobile, yet stable and controllable relationship between the state's internal order and the development of its forces.

Liberalism, on the other hand, is concerned about governing too much. 'Liberal political reason sees individual liberty as a limit, if not to the legitimate reach of the state then certainly to its effectiveness' (Hindess, 2005: 394). However, attempts to promote order in and through the production of knowledge about populations and their activities persist in modern liberal societies. Although liberalism marks a shift from a 'police conception of order as a visible grid of communication' to a concern with promoting 'the necessarily opaque, dense, autonomous character of the processes of population', the unfolding of these autonomous processes still had to be protected and secured (Gordon, 1991: 21).

Liberalism ushers in a new form of police based on 'a knowledge of economics, social, and other processes outside the formal sphere of the state rather than on a transparent knowledge of the minutiae of activities, things, and humans' (Dean, 2000: 42). Liberalism thereby demarcates the social from the political, while at the same time constantly intervening in the social in an attempt to monitor, know, and regulate societal processes, so that they can unfold according to what is viewed as their immanently natural course. This knowledge is produced above all by the various social sciences – notably sociology and economics – that seek to understand society on its own grounds. Indeed, under liberalism the social constitutes the prime 'field of governmental security in its widest sense' (Gordon, 1991: 35). But liberalism does not take the orderliness and peacefulness of the social for granted. For liberalism social order is something that needs to be produced and maintained (Neocleous, 2000). Thus, liberal political reason is, above all, concerned about governing too much, while still governing enough to ensure the (re)production of an orderly society that allows for the smooth operation of capital accumulation. Although liberal state intervention is limited by individual liberty, not everybody is considered to be equally capable of exercising their liberty and some are even construed as threats to the very existence of the liberal order. This is why authoritarianism and violence persist within liberal regimes. In fact, liberal rule rests on a distinction between 'safe' and 'dangerous' life, between forms of life that can circulate freely and forms of life that need to be excluded because they are held to pose a threat to the free circulation of safe forms of life.

There is, however, more than just a binary opposition between safe and dangerous life at stake here. Liberal security also centers around the rationality of risk management. Individuals, groups and even entire populations are routinely slotted into risk categories; that is to say, they are located on a hierarchy of liberal development. Those who are held to possess the full capacity to lead autonomous lives are at the top and those who are deemed a threat to society are at the bottom of this hierarchy. In brief, liberal social control hinges both on a temporal scale of development, of becoming-liberal and on a spatial distinction between safe and dangerous lives. And the identification, analysis, containment, management and eradication of risky and dangerous circulations is the chief task of the liberal police, which does not just include the institution of the public police but all public and private agencies tasked with the management of potentially risky circulations (such as welfare and employment offices, public health institutions, etc.) (Neocleous, 2000; see also Kienscherf, 2013).

What best describes the processes of producing and maintaining a liberal social order is the term pacification. 'Pacification' and the set of practices it signifies date back to early European attempts to subdue recalcitrant colonial populations (Neocleous, 2011c: 198–201; 2013). The term entered the US politico-military lexicon in the context of counterinsurgency operations in Vietnam, but has been rarely used since the United States' defeat in Indochina. However, even if the term itself is no longer in fashion, practices of pacification continue to be deployed in attempts to fabricate liberal order both at home and abroad. Pacification aims to produce and reproduce more pliable populations through developmental programs while trying to eradicate those who are deemed recalcitrant to liberal rule (Kienscherf, 2011). In short, an analytic of pacification helps us not only draw out the relations between government and violence but also understand the quotidian processes of producing and maintaining a social order that is formatted for the imperatives of capital accumulation.

Pacifying Political Protest

Police response to civil unrest in the continental United States has been shaped by the experiences of expeditionary counterinsurgency operations. Indeed, practices of pacification were re-imported into the United States during the 1960s. When US cities were gripped by a series of civil disorders,

demonstrations and full-fledged riots during the so-called 'long, hot summers' from 1965 to 1968, the police was at a loss. Local police departments had neither the equipment nor the experience to deal with large-scale urban unrest. So they decided to turn to the military.[3] Indeed, during the mid to late 1960s there was a massive transfer of know-how and equipment from the military to local police departments (Allen, 1969; Flitcraft, 1971; Pinto, 1971; Parenti, 1999; Quinney, 1974; Webb, 1971; Williams, 2011). For instance, the police obtained so-called non-lethal agents such as CN and CS gas, developed for use in Vietnam, but also helicopters and armored personnel carriers from the military. In the late 1960s the army was also more directly involved in attempts to quell domestic unrest. Army personnel frequently acted as advisors to the police and National Guard during major protest events. The army also put designated anti-riot troops on stand-by, set up a national riot control center and conducted intelligence operations against social movement activists in the continental United States (Department of the US Army, 1968; Halloran, 1971a, 1971b, 1972; Pyle, 1970; Sheehan, 1968b, 1968a; *The New York Times*, 1968). However, the transfer of military counterinsurgency techniques to the police was about more than just anti-riot tactics and gear. Many of the lessons gleaned from pacification efforts in the Global South also stressed the importance of more compliance-based approaches. After all, successful counterinsurgency operations are viewed as combining security, development and good governance into a concerted effort to convince so-called reconcilable elements within the targeted population to support the counterinsurgents while eradicating the so-called irreconcilable elements.

From the 1970s onwards there has been an increasing fine-tuning of protest policing. Many social movement scholars describe this as a move from 'escalated force' to 'negotiated management' (McPhail et al., 1998; McPhail and McCarthy, 2005; Soule and Davenport, 2009). Throughout the 1960s police response to mass protest was dominated by, often unprovoked, mass-arrests and the indiscriminate use of force, and showed little concern for protesters' First Amendment rights. This caused an increasing number of 'on-the-job troubles' for the police, including property damage, injuries and even deaths, which in turn led to 'in-the-job troubles' such as public criticisms on the part of both civil liberties groups and political elites. In the late 1960s and 1970s various commissions of inquiry – the National Commission on Civil Disorder (Kerner Commission), the National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (Eisenhower Commission) and the National Commission on Campus Unrest (The Scranton Commission) – were set up to look into the causes of urban unrest and violence. One of their key findings was that violence was often exacerbated if not triggered by authoritarian styles of policing (McPhail et al., 1998: 55–7; US Government, 1967). Moreover, in the late 1960s and throughout the 1970s and 1980s the US Supreme Court and federal courts handed down numerous legal decisions that bolstered protesters' First Amendment rights (McPhail et al., 1998: 57–9). So the police had to adopt a more targeted and consensual approach towards protest policing. But where did the new policing tactics come from?

In response to the massive urban unrest of 1967 the Justice Department requested the United States Army Military Police School (USAMPS) to design a civil disturbance orientation course (SEADOC) for civilian police and the National Guard. Indeed, the US Army had a long tradition in preparing its personnel for potential civil disturbances. The first such weeklong course (SEADOC I) opened at Fort Gordon, Georgia, in February 1968 and was held 56 times before it was suddenly discontinued in April 1969. The primary focus of the course was on how to counter urban riots (McPhail et al., 1998: 62). A *New York Times* article entitled 'Army Helps Police Learn About Riots' (Bigart, 1968) describes one such anti-riot class:

> [T]he class attends another outdoor show, this one involving a simulated battle between militant civil rights demonstrators and the National Guardsmen. Both the rioters and the Guardsmen are enacted by the

Army's 503rd Military Police Battalion, one of the units that defended the Pentagon against the peace marchers last October. The clash is staged in a Hollywood type mockup of a community called Riotsville, replete with the normal targets of a looting mob – a liquor store, a television and appliance shop, a sporting goods shop that sells guns, and a drugstore. 'Baby,' a firebrand militant portrayed by a 22-year-old Negro sergeant named Bob Franklin, harangues a crowd, charging police brutality. […] Bricks and rocks made out of rubber, but hefty enough to be realistic, are thrown at the 'Mayor' when he tries to placate the mob. But here comes the National Guard. Using tear gas, bayonets, and an armored personnel carrier, and classic antiriot tactics, the troops prevail. 'Baby' is seized and taken off in the armored car, a prisoner.

A revamped version of the course (SEADOC II) was introduced in May 1970 and continued at least until 1978. SEADOC II incorporated many of the recommendations made by the Kerner and Eisenhower Commissions. It was no longer merely concerned with riot control but with managing a much wider variety of protest activity. SEADOC II was characterized by both strategic and tactical innovations. The strategic concept of 'confrontation management' sought to avoid any overreaction on the part of police to protesters' provocations. On a tactical level SEADOC II stressed the importance of 'minimum necessary force' (US Army Military Police School, 1972; cited in McPhail et al., 1998: 63). This shift in orientation from a focus on more robust riot control to 'confrontation management' and 'minimum necessary force' corresponds to a change in the targets of protest control – from primarily poor African Americans to predominantly white middle-class college kids.

At the same time, the concept of 'minimum necessary force' leaves a lot of room for interpretation as to how much force is really necessary against whom. Minimum necessary force plays a significant role in counterinsurgency (Department of the US Army, 2014: 1.88, 1.89). In fact, minimum necessary force or the proportionality of force is now a central element of all liberal state-sanctioned violence. As Eyal Weizman (2011: 11) puts it:

> While considering the choice of military means, the principle [of proportionality] calls for a balance between military objectives and anticipated damage to civilian life and property. Proportionality is thus not about clear lines of prohibition but rather about calculating and determining balances and degrees.

Minimum necessary force is based on a risk calculus. The amount and type of force to be applied in a given situation is not just determined by the objective at hand and possible harm to civilians or innocent bystanders but also by the potential risk to the security forces themselves and its effects on public opinion. For instance, in its chapter on 'Riot Shield and Riot Baton Techniques' the current US Army Civil Disturbance Operations field manual (Department of the US Army, 2005: 4.4) warns:

> The riot baton is never raised above the head to strike a subject in a club fashion. Not only is it likely to cause permanent injury; but it also gives an unfavorable image of the control force. The soldier is also vulnerable to an attack on his rib cage when his arm is raised.

SEADOC II provided the police with more targeted and selective protest control tactics, and thus played a major part in the development of a negotiated management strategy. Another key ingredient of negotiated management is a standardized protest permitting system. The overall objective of the 'negotiated management' strategy is to institutionalize protest events and minimize community disruption. The permitting system provides authorities with an instrument to distinguish between 'reconcilable' and 'irreconcilable' activists in advance of any protest event. 'Good' protest events that keep within the bounds of the permitting system are allowed to go forward and are even facilitated by the police. 'Bad' protests – those that occur without official sanction – are still met with coercion (Gillham, 2011; King, 2013). The negotiated management strategy thus

imposes a normative structure on protest: it seeks to delimit what political dissent is. Even a rejection of the permitting system on the part of protesters reproduces its logic, because those who do follow the norms set down by the negotiated management strategy are criminalized and thus denied any position of political dissent (King, 2013: 472–4). As King (2013: 465) shows, the negotiated management strategy is not a more consensual approach to protest policing but a 'multi-layered form of social control'.

Some scholars (Gillham, 2011; Gillham et al., 2013) argue that the negotiated management strategy has recently been replaced by a new strategy, which they call 'strategic incapacitation'. 'Strategic incapacitation' arose in response to protest activity that sought to break out of the constraints of the permitting system. The new organizational forms and the disruptive tactics of the global justice movement that emerged in the 1990s posed a severe challenge to the negotiated management approach. The disruption of the 1999 WTO meeting in Seattle showed that global justice activists were no longer willing to play by the rules of the protest permitting system. Strategic incapacitation complements rather than replaces the negotiated management strategy. Strategic incapacitation still depends on a distinction between 'reconcilable' and 'irreconcilable' protesters. But this distinction is no longer merely made through a permitting system (which nonetheless remains in place), but the large-scale proactive surveillance of individual activists and entire movements. Activists who are perceived as posing a risk are frequently detained well in advance of any protest event. What is more, strategic incapacitation inscribes the distinction between 'reconcilable' and 'irreconcilable' protesters into space: protest space is divided into particular zones using an elaborate fencing system: *hard zones* are where the targets of the protest are located – they are thus completely cordoned off to both protesters and the public; *free speech zones* are where protesters are allowed to gather and exercise their First Amendment rights; *soft zones* are the contested space between *hard zones* and *free speech zones* – this is where clashes between protesters and police are most likely to occur, as police tend to see all protesters but also media representatives and members of the public who enter *soft zones* as potential threats (Gillham et al., 2013; Gillham, 2011). Strategic incapacitation seeks to pacify protest through extensive prior surveillance of both entire social movements and individual activists to prevent disruptive protesters from participating in protest events in the first place, while trying to establish tight control over protest space in order to render protest activity as undisruptive as possible.

Pacifying Risky Communities

Social movement scholars have rarely situated protest policing in the wider context of social control (Oliver, 2008, is a notable exception). But, if we do look at the wider context of social control, we find that at roughly the same time as police adopted a 'softer' approach to protest policing, policing in general developed into two seemingly contradictory directions: on the one hand, there was an increasing emphasis on community policing, which was supposed to foster cooperation between the public police and local communities (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Garland, 2001; Herbert, 1999, 2006; Williams, 2011); on other hand, the 1970s also saw rising incarceration rates and the proliferation of paramilitary police units (Kraska and Kappeler, 1997; Simon, 1993, 2000, 2007; Wacquant, 2001b, 2011a, 2009).

A number of scholars have suggested that in most Western societies policing has become more pre-emptive, more compliance-based and more concerned with the identification and management of risk (De Lint and Hall, 2009; Ericson and Haggerty, 1997; Maguire, 2000; O'Malley, 1992). Here liberal democracies are viewed as risk societies in which 'governance is directed at the provision of security' (Ericson and Haggerty, 1997: 85). In this context, policing is aimed at identifying, tracking, managing, distributing, containing and/or eliminating risks. Ericson and Haggerty (1997: 67–80)

note that a risk management approach to policing manifests itself in the influential paradigm of community policing. Indeed, community policing is still widely touted as an effective compliance-based form of law enforcement that seeks to co-produce security with local communities (Herbert, 2006). Yet, the apparently compliance-based rationality of community policing does entail rather coercive practices (see Herbert, 1999). Or, to be more precise, risk management sets the parameters for other more robust practices of policing, because some individuals, populations and spaces are slotted into risk categories that render them impervious to compliance-based approaches. Community policing is backed up by an increasingly para-militarized approach to policing whose big guns are trained on those subjects who are risk-profiled as enemies of the liberal order.

When the first police paramilitary units were set up in the 1970s their mission was limited to exceptional situations such as hostage takings, sniper attacks and terrorism, but during the early 1980s, their brief was greatly expanded (Balko, 2006; Kraska, 2007; Kraska and Kappeler, 1997). Kraska and Kappeler's survey of 548 US police departments (1997: 5–12) found that from the early 1980s police paramilitary units became involved in an ever wider set of activities, including many ordinary policing duties. Some of the police officials quoted in Kraska and Kappeler's study make a very explicit case for the role of paramilitary police forces in community policing:

> The key to our success is that we're an elite crime fighting team that's not bogged down in the regular bureaucracy. We focus on 'quality of life' issues like illegal parking, loud music, bums, neighbor troubles. We have the freedom to stay in a hot area and clean it up – particularly gangs. *Our tactical enforcement team works nicely with our department's emphasis on community policing*. (cited in Kraska and Kappeler, 1997: 13; emphasis added)

> It's going to come to the point that the only people that are going to be able to deal with these problems are highly trained tactical teams with proper equipment to go into a neighborhood and *clear the neighborhood and hold it*; allowing community policing and problem oriented policing officers to come in and start turning the neighborhood around. (cited in Kraska and Kappeler, 1997: 13; emphasis added)

What is more, the compliance-based rationality of community policing is, in fact, informed by experiences of counterinsurgency-style pacification. Christian Parenti (1999: 24–6) suggests that community policing is the soft side of the militarization of the police, a community relations effort aimed at winning the hearts and minds of embattled communities. According to an article in the *FBI Bulletin*, 'community relations efforts were born in the turbulent sixties as police concentrated on rebuilding their image, gaining community support and cooling the brush fires of violence' (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1974: 23; cited in Parenti, 1999: 24). Indeed, in the late 1960s the authorities came to realize that the riots in the predominantly black inner-city ghettos were frequently compounded if not caused by police brutality. The Kerner Commission on Civil Disturbances put it as follows: 'Invariably the incident that ignites disorder arises from police action. Harlem, Watts, Newark and Detroit – all major outbursts of recent years – were precipitated by routine arrests of Negroes for minor offenses by white police' (US Government, 1967: 206). As a result, the police were supposed to become more attuned to minority communities. Community relations thus became a tactical element within a nonetheless heavily militarized policing strategy – a tactic that was itself borrowed from the military. Indeed, Parenti (1999: 24–5) draws very explicit parallels to counterinsurgency efforts in Vietnam:

> The gendarmerie needed to become more thoroughly insinuated into the communities they policed. And law enforcement, traduced by a decade of its own misdeeds, was in need of re-legitimization. But this 'soft' side of the great leap forward borrowed just as heavily from the military, as did helicopter patrols, computer systems, SWAT teams, and regional anti-riot plans. As in Vietnam, so too in the cities the battle

for 'hearts and minds' was as essential as any satellite photo or high-tech firepower. […] If, in the police view, the much storied 'militant Negro' was the domestic equivalent to the Viet Cong, then the soft community police strategies – like block watches and police community alliances – were domestic parallels to the 'strategic hamlets' of South Vietnam.

The author of a 2006 RAND report *On 'Other War': Lessons from Five Decades of RAND Counterinsurgency Research* (Long, 2006: 53) also draws very explicit parallels between community policing and counterinsurgency-style pacification:

[P]acification is best thought of as a massively enhanced version of the 'community policing' technique that emerged in the 1970s (encouraged in part by RAND research). Community policing is centered on a broad concept of problem solving by law enforcement officers working in an area that is well-defined and limited in scale, with sensitivity to geographic, ethnic, and other boundaries. Patrol officers form a bond of trust with local residents, who get to know them as more than a uniform. The police work with local groups, businesses, churches, and the like to address the concerns and problems of the neighborhood.

The author views pacification in expeditionary counterinsurgency operations as 'an expansion of this concept [of community policing] to include greater development and security assistance' (Long, 2006: 53). So, policing 'high-risk' communities in the homeland is cast as a just more or less toned-down variant of counterinsurgency-style pacification.

Community policing and paramilitary policing thus ought to be seen as part of an overall pacification program that targets individuals, populations and spaces according to their position on the scale of liberal development: beneficent, albeit sometimes highly paternalistic, means are directed at those who may still develop these abilities, while those who are seen as embodying a threat to the social order are met with coercion.

Conclusion

Contemporary US social control is torn between reaffirming a sovereign state capable of providing security within its territory and attempts to reactivate non-state crime control through 'responsibilizing' private citizens. On the one hand, state intervention in social control has steadily increased; while, on the other hand, the state has seemingly relinquished responsibility for social control through efforts to reactivate modes of informal social control. Under a negotiated management strategy the police seek to cooperate with protest organizers to co-produce 'safe' protest events. Indeed, protest organizers are frequently enjoined to self-police a protest event through the use of marshals. Community policing initiatives, such as the Department of Justice's 'Weed and Seed' program, aim to co-produce 'safe' communities with the help of local residents. Yet practices of responsibilization do not necessarily undermine sovereignty. Police and local communities or police and protest organizers do not co-produce security as equal partners. More often than not the police seek to enlist members of a targeted population 'as their "eyes and ears", to become in effect, auxiliary police officers gathering the sorts of intelligence that those in uniform cannot hope to acquire' (Herbert, 1999: 154). Community policing and the negotiated management strategy can, and do, mobilize local residents and protest organizers respectively as human intelligence assets who can provide the necessary information that allows for the targeted and selective application of coercion and/or consent. In fact, neither the reproduction of sovereignty nor the reactivation of non-state social control are ends in themselves. They are rather tactically deployed to pacify and manage individuals, populations and spaces that are seen as either not (yet) fully amenable to liberal rule, or as posing a threat to the liberal capitalist order.

The concepts of repression and militarization are inadequate tools for a radical critique of the targeted and selective application of coercion and consent in efforts to produce and maintain a liberal capitalist order both at home and abroad. Standard accounts of militarization cannot explain why, on the one hand, the police's coercive capabilities have been massively expanded through the acquisition of military tactics and gear, while, on the other hand, the transfer of counterinsurgency-derived tactics to the police has made coercion more selective and targeted. The concept of repression, moreover, stresses the coercive and disruptive effects of social control while ignoring its productive and facilitative aspects.

Indeed, liberal social control seeks to adjust the mix of coercion and consent to the level of risk its targets are held to pose to the liberal order. Liberal social control aims to produce and maintain a liberal capitalist order that allows for the free circulation of individuals and populations who are held to possess the capacity to lead autonomous and productive lives (Rasmussen, 2011, shows that autonomy in the sense of the capacity for self-governance plays a prominent in liberal rule).[4] Those who are viewed as (not yet) capable of leading liberal lives become subjected to more or less beneficent (depending on their level of risk), albeit often highly disciplinary and paternalistic, means of social control (ranging from welfare to criminal justice).[5] And those who are seen as threats to the liberal social order are taken out of circulation altogether (either through long prison sentences or even lethal force) (Dean, 2000). In its twin goal to produce pliable populations and to eradicate dangerous elements within these populations, the concept of pacification encapsulates the whole spectrum of liberal social control.

In the United States poor young African-American men are the prime targets of para-militarized policing and mass incarceration, while poor African-American women are the prime targets of increasingly disciplinary welfare-cum-workfare programs:

> The activation of disciplinary programs applied to the unemployed, the indigent, single mothers and others 'on assistance' so as to push them onto the peripheral sectors of the employment markets, on the one side, and the deployment of an extended police and penal net with a reinforced mesh in the dispossessed districts of the metropolis, on the other side, are two components of a single apparatus for the management of poverty that aims at effecting the authoritarian rectification of the behaviors of populations recalcitrant to the emerging economic and symbolic order. (Wacquant, 2009: 14)

Indeed, this 'single apparatus' of pacification targets particular populations (the unemployed, single mothers, delinquents, etc.), individuals thought to belong to these troublesome populations as well as specific spaces ('dispossessed districts of the metropolis') in order to either reintegrate them into liberal life through disciplinary workfare programs or exclude them from liberal life through extended policing and increasing judicial punitiveness (see also Soss et al., 2011).

Developments in poverty governance, the deployment of paramilitary police in the domestic war on drugs and recent events in Ferguson clearly show that the apparently purely technical categories of risk and threat that decide who is to be selected for what type of coercive and/ or consensual treatment are by no means politically innocent. Categories of risk and threat, or rather the developmental scales of liberal and illiberal life, frequently reflect and reinforce existing societal divisions along the lines of race, class and gender.

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Notes

1. The official report of this review was published on 1 December 2014 to coincide with the Obama administration's announcement of a US$260 million program for equipping police with body cameras and for promoting community policing. The administration also announced some reform of the federal transfer of equipment to state and local law enforcement agencies but stopped well short of curtailing the transfer of military equipment to the police (Lewis, 2014; Executive Office of the President, 2014).
2. The new US Army field manual FM 3-24, *Insurgencies and Countering Insurgencies*, gives the following definition of insurgency and counterinsurgency:

    'An insurgency is the organized use of subversion and violence to seize, nullify, or challenge political control of a region. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself. Counterinsurgency is the comprehensive civilian and military efforts designed to simultaneously defeat and contain insurgency and address its root causes' (US Army, 2014: 1.3).

    Counterintelligence originally referred to efforts to thwart a foreign power's intelligence-gathering activities. But from 1956 to 1971 the FBI (which still is the US government agency responsible for spy-catching) also ran a counterintelligence program (COINTELPRO) whose purpose was to 'expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize' domestic groups that were held to be subversive (cited in Cunningham, 2004: 6). Targets of COINTELPRO included the Communist Party USA, various Black Power organizations, civil rights groups and the Ku Klux Klan, as well as various antiwar groups. To the extent that counterintelligence efforts can also be directed at 'subversive' groups, and not just at foreign intelligence services, it does play a major role in counterinsurgency operations. Yet, the scope of counterinsurgency is much broader, because it also includes various programs for not just destroying subversive and insurgent groups but also for pacifying the population at large through developmental efforts and the delivery of vital services.
3. Turning to the military for help in quelling domestic civil unrest was a conscious choice. In fact, race riots during the first half of the 20th century, for example in East St Louis in 1917, in Tulsa in 1921 or the 'red summer' of 1919, did not spur a similarly formalized transfer of equipment and know-how from the military to the police. This is most likely due to the general hysteria of the 1960s. At that time, radical political activism and protest in the United States were frequently seen as one more front in a communist-led global anti-colonial struggle. Many officials saw urban unrest as the precursor of a fully-fledged insurgency (Allen, 1969; Halloran 1971; see also Parenti, 1999). Yet, finding out what accounts for the specific contours of police-military relations after the 1960s calls for a lot more historically comparative research into state responses to civil disturbances, including labor militancy.
4. The production of autonomous and productive subjects who are willing to 'freely' sell their labor power for whatever price has been the key objective of liberal poverty governance since the 19th century poor law reforms in England. The putative threat of dependency to the poor's willingness to sell their labor power has always loomed large in liberal poverty governance and still continues to do so today (see Dean, 1991, on the history of liberal poverty governance and Soss et al., 2011, on contemporary US poverty governance).
5. See Soss et al. (2011) and Wacquant (2009) for a discussion of the relations between welfare and criminal justice and the role of paternalism in governing the racialized poor.

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