

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

WILLEM DE LINT and ALAN HALL, *Intelligent Control: Developments in Public Order Policing in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009, 365 p., index.

Intelligent Control documents recent as well as historical shifts in the policing of strikes and protests in Canada. A fine example of what two talented intellectuals with different scholarly backgrounds can accomplish when collaborating, this book couples the literature about public policing with the critical insights of political economy. Specifically, de Lint and Hall ask why a conciliatory policing approach was adopted at the very moment when political economists thought a return to coercion had occurred due to the emergence of neoliberal economic policies (see Leo Panitch and Donald Swartz, *From Consent to Coercion: The Assault on Trade Union Freedoms*). Tracing the historical development of public policing, de Lint and Hall examine the complex relationship that plays out between coercion and consent in the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism.

Based on the analysis of over 70 interviews as well as archival research and newspaper analysis, Intelligent Control offers a convincing sketch of how the labour-policing nexus has changed from the late 19th century to the early 21st century. In chapter three, de Lint and Hall discuss the role of the North West Mounted Police as well as the Pinkerton Private Detective Agency in breaking strikes through the brutal use of force, infiltrating labour organizations, and working closely with the employers who fired and blacklisted radical union leaders. Labour was militantly organized at that time, pushing for broad political and social change. In the later chapters of Intelligent Control, the authors consider how the recognition of labour unions and the subsequent shift towards collective bargaining made strike actions more routine. Far from invoking the specter of mass insurrection, strikes through the 1980s and 1990s came to be viewed as civil matters; strike captains became responsibilized citizens, self-policing collective action in a manner that no longer called for direct police intervention.

In contrast to social movement scholars (such as Donatella della Porta and Herbert Reiter [Eds.] *Policing Protest: The Control of Mass Demonstrations in Western Democracies*) who argue there has been a broad shift toward conciliatory policing in Western democracies, de Lint and Hall provide a more nuanced analysis that accounts for both consent and constraint. The authors contend “there is little evidence to suggest that the public police have relinquished the authority or readiness to put down disorder or protect public safety through shows or exercises of force” (5). Yet far from viewing the police as subordinate to overarching political and economic interests, de Lint and Hall argue that the police occupy a “relatively autonomous” role in the regulation of

collective action. Police agencies in every city have their own sets of political interests and must manage a highly scrutinized public image.

Following the enactment of a regime of industrial pluralism and the routinization of collective bargaining relationships in the wake of the Second World War, it was found that police repression further exacerbated an already tense situation. Police institutions moved towards more conciliatory practices. Drawing on the governmentality literature, de Lint and Hall note how police have come to rely upon the capacity for labour and protest movements to self-police. “Strikes declined as agreements were increasingly reached without work stoppages...” (86), signaling a more bureaucratic and narrowly economic approach on the part of unions. Union leaders feared that more direct tactics or visible protests would cause them to lose public face. Police also became hesitant to crack down on organized labour as police themselves professionalized and unionized. Conciliatory policing takes hold during this conjuncture, when strikes become less about economic disruption and more about public relations.

The middle chapters of Intelligent Control chart the rise of police liaisons, starting with the Burnaby Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Hamilton Police, and then the Windsor Police Department. The argument here is that the move towards conciliatory policing based on accommodation and negotiation is part of the broader process of garnering consent. In the words of de Lint and Hall, “by helping strikers to ‘get their message’ across, police are both enabling and reinforcing the construction of strikes as mere forms of communication rather than substantial threats to capital or authority” (152). Again, deployment of liaison policing is contingent on local dynamics between labour, employers, police and the media. Framing the strike as a civil matter leads to greater self-policing by union leaders, and the authors question whether such pacified relations with police are solid platforms “to achieve meaningful change” (300).

Contrary to the “return to coercion” thesis advanced by Marxist political economists, the restructuring of public policing through the imposition of new fiscal constraints and demands for greater accountability has, perhaps counter-intuitively, reinforced a commitment to a liaison model that took root in the 1970s and 1980s. At the same time that the policing of labour has become more routinized due in part to making key labour organizers responsible for their actions, the policing of other protest groups has become militarized (which includes changes in strategy and the array of weaponry police use to quell crowds). The reason why crowd control policing has moved towards militarization is because police services “see strikes as highly predictable events” (215) whereas protests organized by other social movement groups “are seen as less predictable” (216). De Lint and Hall point to how land claims activism and transnational activism such as protests at the 2002 Group of Eight meetings in Kananaskis engender a more militarized response. “This does not mean liaison is dead” (249), but it means that police must adapt to numerous forms of contentious action, some that require conciliation with union leaders and others that attempt to suffocate spontaneous forms of dissent. In other words, “communications and liaison are a flexible response, while the mobilization of the crowd control unit is not” (258).

The conjoining of conciliatory techniques with crowd control policing, public relations with paramilitarism, is what de Lint and Hall refer to as “intelligent control.” Intelligent control requires (1) the appearance of a liaison function that ostensibly seeks to negotiate with and accommodate strike leaders, but at the same time necessitates (2) the use of more surveillance to produce actionable intelligence, coupled with (3) paramilitarization. The production of actionable intelligence is facilitated through networking across scales of policing, as well as intensified information gathering and sharing. Intelligence is crucial to policing organizations when their goal is pre-empting the effectiveness of protests. De Lint and Hall argue that municipal police are increasingly reliant on intelligence produced by organizations at the national scale of policing (e.g., the Canadian Security Intelligence Service, or CSIS). Paramilitarization occurs through the creation of special police units with access to advanced weaponry as well as specialized training and strategy for crowd dispersal. Often these paramilitary strata of policing agencies take the form of Special Weapons and Tactics squads.

We have reviewed the contributions of Intelligent Control at some length, because this book is an impressive attempt to connect the sociology of policing with political economy. However, there are a few issues that de Lint and Hall could have explored further both theoretically and empirically. One issue is how the move to an intelligent control model requires novel combinations of scales or echelons of policing. For de Lint and Hall, the second component of intelligent control is surveillance, which requires multi-agency projects across provincial and national borders. The gathering and sharing of intelligence requires numerous police, security and intelligence agencies working in different locations with varying jurisdictions to consolidate their knowledge of protestors and cooperate on specific projects, especially large protests during economic summits. De Lint and Hall do not provide many empirical examples of how organizations like CSIS become involved in demobilizing local struggle. They mention the work of Integrated National Security Enforcement Teams and Integrated Border Enforcement Teams in facilitating surveillance cum social movement suppression, but do not provide many empirical examples to support this claim. Nor do they have much empirical material which supports the idea that municipal police are increasingly reliant on intelligence gathered by other agencies at the national scale. These important points deserve to be substantiated further. Arguably this is a methodological issue – such data could only be produced through using the Access to Information Act or by suing the government (see Matthew Yeager, “The Freedom of Information Act as a Methodological Tool: Suing the Government for Data,” *Canadian Journal of Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 2006).

While the labour history that de Lint and Hall offer is sensitive to the constraints faced by workers in public policing on the periphery (e.g., in labour camps and mines), their analysis could benefit from a more nuanced approach to conceptualizing “labour.” What we mean is that Intelligent Control remains heavily focused on the regulation of industrial workers in Ontario; the authors do not examine how public policing is carried out in the regulation of other sectors of the economy. A more detailed analysis of public sector struggles would be beneficial. Further research concerning the regulation of public sector workers during the Post-Fordist period could be carried out using the theoretical tools de Lint and Hall provide.

While Intelligent Control is intended to be a study of the public policing of labour and social movements, it remains heavily oriented towards labour. A strong case is made for the continuing importance of labour in shaping the public policing regime, but de Lint and Hall provide only a cursory analysis of the so-called “new social movements.” Social movement theorists differentiate between social movements organized around labour and the “new social movements” emerging in the 1960s which are marked by the introduction of prefigurative strategies and tactics, including civil disobedience and direct action, the creative use of information technologies, so-called “postmaterialist” values, and a plurality of emergent collective identities (see Alain Touraine, *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*; Alberto Melucci et al., *Nomads of the Present: Social Movements and Individual Needs in Contemporary Society*). While a distant echo appears in examining the police response to urban riots in the United States, the role of student protests and urban social movements in Canada remains unclear. De Lint and Hall only jump onto the scene much later with the native land occupations through the 1990s and the anti-globalization movement at the turn of the millennium.

One final issue that could be explored further using the framework that de Lint and Hall provide is how social movement groups which rely less on broad scale organizing or public protest and more on affinity group organizing as well as direct action (e.g., certain elements of the animal rights movement like the Animal Liberation Front and Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty) are suppressed and kept under surveillance by police today. De Lint and Hall do not focus on social movement groups which utilize the most contentious tactics. Related to the question of tactics, there is also the question of the spatiality of contentious direct action. When activists protest on sidewalks in front of the homes of corporate CEOs who fund medical experiments on animals, it raises a set of questions concerning how police attempt to manage and contain actions that are small scale, prompt, and unpredictable. De Lint and Hall do not focus too much on the actions of anarchist groups, for instance; the authors focus more on the problem of attaining consent in complex crowds. Arguably the example of how police respond to small groups involved in contentious direct action would be best suited to demonstrate how intelligence is weaving its way through even the most rudimentary municipal and rural police forces.

Nevertheless, Intelligent Control will interest a wide range of scholars, including labour historians, sociologists concerned with social movement repression, criminologists who study policing, as well as socio-legal scholars conducting research regarding law enforcement. In fact, because of its unique argument and historical breadth, Intelligent Control will certainly become a must read for anyone in criminology and socio-legal studies in North America.

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