

12 Contentious policing in Paris

The street as a space for emotional public solidarity

Virginie Milliot and Stéphane Tonnelat

Introduction

Since 2008, informal flea markets have been spreading throughout poor areas of Paris. Many people, including immigrants, have resorted to selling and buying recuperated goods in order to make a living during tough economic times. As in other cities around the world (Low 2000; Bromley 2000; Cross 1998), the police have been cracking down on street peddlers, although with mixed results. Such repression, at the behest of inhabitants and local elected officials concerned with security and cleanliness, often puts police officers at odds with the informal order of the street, causing vendors, clients, and passers-by to react to arrests and brutality. Policing thus becomes the catalyzing agent for the formation of publics mobilized for a cause.

The analysis in this chapter stems from a research project on the experience of public spaces in large cities. Hoping to test the hypothesis made by Isaac Joseph that multi-ethnic neighborhoods are the crucibles for the formation of urban mentality, we conducted an ethnographic inquiry in the Barbès neighborhood of Paris between 2007 and 2009. We focused on the modes of management of co-presence, on the daily adjustments that urbanites make to deal with the breaches of civility and accessibility that happen in the neighborhood streets (Milliot 2012a). This chapter thus contributes to the literature on public space, but with a specific focus on the role of the police in instant social mobilizations. The scene that we describe below takes place adjacent a subway entrance, in a transitory area between a major thoroughfare, a market and a neighborhood. This area is neither clearly regulated by the rules of anonymity and mobility of pure spaces of flow, nor by the commercial and moral transactions proper to the market, nor by the characteristic traits of neighborhood life (Hunter 1985; Tonnelat 2010). The reaction of the crowd to the police intervention is in fact revealing of a specific social order, which we attempt to analyze. We first describe the scene. We situate it in the Paris context before analyzing the confrontation of public orders and the emergence from the street of a shared conception of justice. We will then discuss the collective emotive reactions of the crowd to the action of the police that we observed.

The city, the crowd, and emotions

In urban studies, thoughts on emotions have been tied to theories of the crowd. From the late nineteenth century on, two different conceptions have been opposed. On the one hand, Gustave Le Bon (1895) described the crowd as emotionally versatile, receptive to all sorts of influence and subject to unpredictable behaviors. These properties make the crowd behave as if governed by one fickle mind. Crowds therefore are mostly irrational. They can become dangerous and must be carefully controlled and monitored. Opposed to this conception of the crowd, Gabriel Tarde (1901) and Robert Park (1972[1903]) were more interested in the crowd as a first step towards a more organized social form and ultimately towards social change. For them, passers-by are only scrambled until the moment when a common faith or goal moves them together. Tarde (1901: 21) noted: “As soon as a new spectacle focuses their gazes and their minds, as an unforeseen danger or sudden indignation turns their hearts in the same direction, they begin to aggregate obediently, and this first degree of aggregation is the crowd.” The crowd thus emerges when attentions converge through a process of emotional contagion in direct interactions. For Tarde, the crowd can give rise to a more elaborate form of association, which is the “public.” In this case, people are scattered but their minds interact at a distance and produce simultaneity of convictions in time, if not in space. Whereas the crowd is close to an animal aggregate, the public is a more “evolved form of sociability and association” (Joseph 2001: 213). For Park, the only difference between the crowd and the public lies in the modes of organization of attention and of joint activities. The former characterizes a gathering in a physical location, whereas the latter comprises a collection of individuals in different locations. But both are “agents of social change opposed to norms producing forms such as groups and sects” (Joseph 2001: 215). Park thus does not understand emotions as psychological reactions, but as a social dimension of experience. In this regard, crowds and publics are reactive forms of social organization that can generate social change by forging new norms and values independently of already existing groups and institutions.

In our work on public space, it is this question of the emergence of social ties independent of specific statutory spaces that we are looking to explore via the sociology of emotions. In this regard, the recent development of the theory of social movements and more specifically, the work of James M. Jasper, is important to our thinking. Almost a century after Park and Tarde, Jasper’s theory of emotions and social movements (Jasper 1998) builds on this early tradition. Notably, he argues individuals who have been exposed to “moral shocks” that have pushed them to become engaged for a specific cause are often at the origin of social movements. Although Jasper does not discuss the urban dimensions of such an emotional experience, it is reminiscent of Tarde’s theory of simultaneous convictions brought about by common emotions.

It is this precise moment that interests us. This ephemeral eruption in public space can only be grasped through experience. This is why we begin this chapter with an extensive description of an incident between the police and

street vendors, in the form of a testimony written shortly after the event. This testimony contains the empirical support for the theoretical interpretation we propose in this chapter. According to Dulong (1998), a witness must be morally responsible for their reaction to an event, their feelings and their judgment. It is therefore as much upon the facts reported here as upon the moral consistency of our testimony that we base our analysis (also see Katz (2002) about causal inferences in ethnographic descriptions).

A disputed arrest in la Goutte d'Or

March 25, 2009, early afternoon; the crowd is dense in front of the Barbès subway exit under the elevated tracks. Shoppers navigate the public space, encumbered with bags. Next to the regular market, a few street vendors display ill-assorted objects on improvised cardboard mats laid on the concrete. These twenty-first-century scavengers are becoming a more common feature of the Parisian landscape. On their improvised stands, retirees, refugees and casual workers transform the leftovers of the society of consumption into resources. This economy of survival renders visible a misery that one thought belonged to the past.

Suddenly, people gather around three uniformed policemen. They have just arrested a vendor. A woman, distraught, is clinging to his arm. She wants to go with him. The police refuse categorically. In her arms, a terrified four-year-old child cries for his father. Witnesses are gripped by the scene, and some speak up: "He is not hurting anybody" ; "He isn't dangerous to nobody." A policewoman justifies the arrest by explaining that the man is illegally selling canned food donated by a charity. A voice answers, "to be poor and to try to survive, is it a crime?" The policemen violently separate the man from his wife. The child is screaming with terror. The excessive force used by the police is not tolerable to the people gathered: "It's a shame to do this to a kid!" "The shame is to use a kid as a shield," replies the policewoman. When the policemen drag the man to their car, parked a dozen yards away on the Boulevard de la Chapelle, the crowd follows suit with a wide clamor of protest. Nobody opposes the police and all stay at a respectable distance. But one policeman, visibly overwhelmed by the situation, sprays the crowd with tear gas without warning. The vendor is manhandled. The policemen grab him by the neck; make him kneel down on the road, hands cuffed behind his back. Stéphane Tonnelat steps forward to film the scene and remind the police that they are under the citizens' watch. The same officer walks to him, grabs his camera and smashes it. Then he comes to me, Virginie Milliot, and tries to seize my cell phone. Unable to take it, he throws me forcefully to the ground. A couple of women help me get up. "What a shame. They think they can do anything!" The event provokes angry comments. "Ten meters away, there are people who sell drugs and they never arrest them. They go after the poorest," says a woman. "This is what they use public money for! They should arrest true criminals instead. There are thieves everywhere in the market. You just have to look. They let them be." A man confides to us, "I also sell at the market. I know

him. He is a nice man. He's never caused any trouble." Another woman repeats several times: "You can't let them do this. We cannot help, but you can. You have to log a complaint." Another woman asks if we were able to take pictures. "This is good. You need proof. I don't dare. I am afraid. Several other women also tell us about their fear of the police. Meanwhile, the officers have called for reinforcement. Several vans full of policemen arrive within a few minutes. Several subway security guards in riot gear join them. The display of force is out of proportion. They take the man into the police car and drive away, leaving his wife on the sidewalk, crying tirelessly: "fascists, fascists." Her son, shocked, sobs in her arms, calling for his father. Several women quickly gather around the mother and her child. "It's a shame. They have nothing better to do than arrest innocent people?" "You have to take them to a community organization. They must be prevented from expelling her husband," worries a young woman of Maghrebi descent. A woman from the neighborhood points us to a local organization. "I cannot take her, you go ahead."

We end up at the Goutte d'Or community center. The tension gradually lessens. The child, exhausted, calms down and falls asleep in his mother's arms. We discuss the event, the possibility of testifying and pressing charges. A young woman who accompanied us apologizes: "I cannot do it. I am afraid." She will not explain why, but her fear, similar to the other women we talked to on the street, denotes an extreme feeling of vulnerability in the neighborhood. We learn that Maria is Russian, her husband, Alec, is Armenian. They fled Russia because of police violence. They asked for asylum and have legal status. They live in social housing but they don't have enough money to live (they each receive 316.20 euros per month as asylum seekers) and they do not have the right to work. Maria does not understand what happened. She expresses the need to explain. "We cannot live on what they give us. If I could work, we wouldn't have any problems. In my country, I was a pediatrician My son cannot eat only canned food. He needs vegetables, fruits ... we try to make ends meet, we do nothing wrong." The episode brought back bad memories. "This is France, isn't it? This is not a dictatorship." The head of the organization then took up the case with great care and professionalism. She told us that she was used to these types of "incidents." Several complaints from the neighborhood were made last year to The National Commission for Police Professional Ethics. She then gave us a lawyer's contact information and tried to contact the *arrondissement* deputy mayor for security. She also attempted to get information from the police station about the place of detention. The next day, we learned that he had been detained without charge for 24 hours at the local station. His body was covered with bruises. He was finally released after signing a police statement that he was not given a copy of and that he did not understand, for lack of a translator.

La Goutte d'Or, a Paris neighborhood rife with tension

North East Paris where this police action took place has long been one of the most multicultural neighborhoods in the city. In this old working-class *faubourg* (the

part of the city that was outside former walls), immigrants from Eastern Europe, Northern Africa, and Western Africa have been succeeding one another since the beginning of the twentieth century (Toubon and Messamah 1990). More than a third of its residents are born abroad (compared with 20 percent in Paris as a whole). Immigrants have always found commercial activities that have allowed them to take advantage of this central location (Lallemant 2010). People visit daily by road and public transportation from many places in the metropolitan area to shop for imported products and receive news from their home country. Street-level businesses are a fixture. The occupation of public space by male and immigrant populations has been repeatedly constructed by media as a “public problem” (Gusfield 1984). Anti-communitarian rhetoric has been used for thirty years to justify successive operations of urban renovation.¹ The Goutte d’Or neighborhood has been marked as a target zone for urban policy since 1984 (it has been also labeled a “sensitive urban area” (*zone urbaine sensible*) since 1996²) and went through several phases of urban renewal. Despite these state interventions, the neighborhood retains a strong image in the Parisian imagination. It is heavily marked by the public street life that develops around commercial activities and sociabilities unique to the worlds of immigrants.

While the types of items sold on the street change all the time, ranging from small radios to phone cards to cigarettes, informal street peddling at the Barbès metro station is a continuous activity. At another local metro station, Chateau Rouge, one can find grilled chestnuts, African vegetables, and clothing. Subutex (a prescription drug) and cannabis are sold on the smaller streets. Camerati’s (2006: 88) observations in the neighborhood showed the instant shifts provoked by the police presence: street vendors move and behave as simple passers-by.³ He describes police presence as an element of the “ecology of space”: “Local police work by looking for a balance, an honorable compromise, between, on the one hand, the public order and, on the other hand, activities tied to the local context, even if they are illegal.” The police thus perform an adjustment to a liminal space, where the categories of formality and informality, legality and illegality, are confused.

Since 2008, street peddling has been deemed to be causing trouble by encumbering the public spaces of the neighborhood. At the Goutte d’Or community board meeting of November 27, 2008, precinct captain Pecquet declared:

We have reached the limits of police action. We need other types of responses, judicial and legislative. When someone is arrested for street peddling, the person only gets a summons, and after 24 hours, sometimes 48 hours, he is back out on the street.⁴

For the police, the problem seems to be the lack of any deterrent effect of this penalty and of fines given to insolvent people. At a public meeting on street security at the City Hall of the eighteenth *arrondissement*, the police captain also complained about the obstacles faced by officers to intervene in the neighborhood’s public spaces. The work of the 700 agents in this area was made difficult

by the territory's problems, such as drug dealing and street peddling combined with a changing relationship with the local population. "We are working more and more on the edge in difficult conditions," he explained.⁵

During 2007-09, we observed that police actions often caused public comments. In most cases, they were discussed satirically, symbolically reversing power relations. They could also elicit more general discussions among witnesses about justice and injustice, legitimacy and illegitimacy, legality and illegality (Milliot 2012b). But the scene described earlier was different. It was not experienced from a detached point of view, but from an emotional and reactive one.

What is the nature of these emotions and what drives them? In his later theory of emotions and social movements, Jasper (2011) makes a distinction between "reflex emotions," such as surprise, fear and anger, and "moral emotions," such as shame, pride and indignation, which carry a judgment on the situation at hand. Leaders of social movements and organizers of ritualistic events strive to transform reflex emotions into moral ones, which can be shared and used as durable motivators for engagement. For this, they use diverse props and techniques, such as a stage, a speakerphone, singing, marching, etc. called "sensitizing apparatuses" (Traïni cited by Jasper 2011: 14.8).

In the example that we analyze, emotions quickly spin into an indignation that is not merely supported by political, religious or community values, since the people involved come from numerous cultures. Whereas we have observed on other occasions public reactions based on a sentiment of belonging to a given community, or to the more general category of immigrant, in this case, the crowd is too diverse for this to constitute a valid explanation. Also the market is too pervaded by the street to work as a cosmopolitan canopy, as described by Anderson (2011). Everything happened as if the police action was spontaneously received as an infraction to a tacit public order.

The confrontation of two public orders

In the event described above, two conceptions of public order have clashed. On the one hand, the public order enforced by the police is based on a discretionary interpretation of common law. As guardians entitled to the "monopolistic use of force towards all" (Montjardet 1996), the police must apply the many rules written in law. This incident illustrates the priorities made by the officers about which rules to apply. In this case, repression of street peddling seems to be primary. We call this the public institutional order.

On the other hand, the public order of the street, which we call the public interaction order (Goffman 1963), is regulated by a small set of tacit normative principles such as cooperative mobility, civil inattention, restrained helpfulness and civility towards diversity (Lofland 1998). These principles do not function as strict rules, but they are all the more potent when the location is patronized by an anonymous flow of people, for example, next to a subway station. As one goes more deeply into the neighborhood, the principles of public order weaken as they mingle with other norms and values anchored in specific local cultures

(Tonnelat 2010). But even in the most crowded areas, variations and offenses, as well as reparations and disputes, are many. Thus, public life in this urban neighborhood constantly puts these principles to test, redefining their reach. For example, informal economic activities produce specific types of visual attention as well as forms of public address. The larger sociability emerging from the different worlds of immigration, mostly based on recognizable signs of ethnic cultures, is more open to improvised relations than in more homogenous urban areas. Conflicts also erupt between users defending a right of way and others claiming a space for activities (e.g., informal vending, daily prayer for Muslims, and social gathering of immigrants of the same origin). The street is thus an ongoing stage, where episodes of reciprocity, friction, negotiation, controversy and repair test the street as a public good. The principles of this public order, although at an infra-social level, are powerful regulators of interactions in public space. One of its main ethical foundations is what Isaac Joseph called the “presumption of equality” which is “a presupposed given of public space and social encounters. The question is not whether this equality is established: a presupposition is a regulatory device and a principle for the interaction order” (Joseph 2007: 15). This presumption of equality and its attached reciprocity guide the interactions between unknown urbanites. One consequence is the common rule “first come, first served,” which does not distinguish between the type of person (for example by gender), but only ranks them according to the order inherent to the flow of circulation. It organizes the lines in front of the stands, and even the distribution of selling spots. Only certain people, pregnant women, children, the elderly, and the disabled, enjoy a partially dispensatory status in public space, linked to a perception of vulnerability attached to motherhood, age, and/or disability. While, at the Barbès metro station, cigarette street vendors lead a perpetual struggle against the newspaper vendor in his licensed kiosk, the latter striving to control the sidewalk against the overflow of informal trade, these peddlers commonly help women with strollers and older persons climbing up the stairs to the subway mezzanine.

Logically, the public institutional order and the public interaction order should not come into conflict. Whereas the first order regulates infractions of the law, the second order organizes public behaviors so as to maintain existing activities while avoiding offenses to individual selves and to the gathering (Goffman 1963; Rawls 1987). A form of normative continuity should connect them, notably by calling on the police only when the order of interaction proves unable to manage conflicting situations. Ideally, there would be a form of subsidiary principle between the two public orders. However, the incident described at the chapter’s outset shows a situation where the public institutional order, represented by officers of the law, conflicts with the public order of interaction.

An emerging and shared concept of justice

What begs inquiry here is this critical moment, the sense that a reversal of the hierarchy of institutional and interactional public orders occurred. Instead of

counting on the police to make up for the shortcomings of the public interaction order with their own authority, the crowd attempted to use the norms of the public order of interaction to limit the powers of the police. Could the police abandon their claim of control over the crowd? What could the consequences be in a neighborhood already rife with tensions? Everybody felt the stakes of that “tipping point” (Collins 2001: 41). The public was energized and emboldened to resist the work of the police while the officers immediately called for reinforcement. The speed, the number, and the range of police who quickly arrived reveal the extent of the means deployed to reduce the risk of losing power, and reaffirm the preeminence of the institutional order over any attempt of public self-organization.

To manage a public space, there are two basic systems, declares Jean Loup Gourdon (2001): the material and mechanical physical setting and the ordering, regulatory and appeasing presence of police force. In this case, we can only observe the counterproductive effect of police action, which, instead of appeasing, generated a contested social order. What is at stake? Pierre Favre remarks:

In their daily concrete work, the police draw a general and hierarchic order of what is authorized and forbidden, of what is urgent and what can wait, of what is potentially dangerous and what is harmless, of what is just and what is unjust, of what is acceptable and unacceptable, of what is normal and pathological.

(Favre 2009: 1035)

But this intervention was experienced as an offense to public order, primary because it contravened the presumption of equality by arbitrarily picking one “criminal” among the street vendors. The comment of a nearby vendor: “I sell on the market, I know him, he is a nice man, he never caused any trouble,” expresses the inconsistency of the arrest for the people gathered around the event. In addition, as another comment illustrates, “It is a shame, to do this to a kid,” the officers’ choice contradicted even the exception to the rule by targeting a couple with a young child. It negated the dispensatory benevolence that the parents and the child were benefiting from in the public order of interaction. The arrest thus voided the tacit principles of the interaction order and tended to disqualify it as a means of regulation. As a consequence, the hierarchy of social order imposed by police action fed a shared sentiment of injustice and indignation and provoked a normative reaction. The comments exchanged during the event thus opposed another conception of justice to the legal norm justifying the action of the police, which questioned anew the dominance of the institutional order. Because the people targeted as delinquent by police intervention were poor and vulnerable in the eyes of the gathering,⁶ the action caused the crowd to transform into a public from which emerged a benevolent watch aimed at repairing the offense to the social order of interaction. Emotions took the spectators in and pushed them to redefine the situation by exchanging comments

about the fragility and harmlessness of the couple and about the arbitrariness of police actions. The spontaneous communication attempted to repair public order by reaffirming the value of the presumption of equality. The words and the actions of people caught in the scene thus tried to reconstitute around the woman and her son a specific public order with its own conception of justice. This solidarity impulse was by consequence not only a response to the exposed vulnerability of individuals to the law applied by the police, but also to the weakening of the public order of interaction, on which rest the commercial informal agreements that allow everybody to survive. The impulse arising out of the feeling of injustice thus produced a public characterized by “simultaneity of convictions” (Tarde 1901: 9). The indignation experienced by the witnesses can be compared to the idea of a “moral shock” proposed by James M. Jasper (1998). Examining the role of emotions in collective mobilizations, he uses this concept to analyze social experiences caused by a disconcerting event, a sudden change in the environment that elicits acute emotional reactions, which immediately call for involvement and reaction. Based on a discrepancy between the situation in which individuals are caught and the values which they carry, these tests bring people to reevaluate their expectations, or to the contrary, to work towards fixing the situation to fit their expectations. The values under stress can be anchored in diverse cultures, religions, political and professional opinions. But what is interesting in the case described here is that the spontaneous reaction of the crowd brought forth a shared conception of justice that was directly tied to the public order of interaction,

What is also striking in the event is the perception of an inequality in power and status between the individuals involved. The crowd was principally composed of people belonging to ethnic minority groups, mostly from northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Whether these people hold French citizenship, legal immigration status, or have no legal title, does not seem to matter here as all appear defenseless against the institutional order enforced by the officers. As suggested earlier, several people told us of their fear of the police and their unwillingness to testify. Several people also incited us to press charges. We, and a dozen others,⁷ were the only “white” witnesses of the event. Whereas the relationship between minority and majority is somehow reversed in this neighborhood’s public spaces, it came back distinctly in this event. The people gathered did not feel entitled to act beyond the space of the street. They somehow mandated us to attempt to repair the injustice in arenas in which they did not have legitimate access. A woman resident put us in contact with a local community organization (we do not live in the neighborhood), who helped us take the event from the street into the political and judicial spheres. We were put in contact with a local elected deputy mayor who in turn called the local police commissioner, and with a lawyer who used our testimonies to argue the case of the arrested vendor. In this way, the public perspective of the order of interaction was translated into the language of the institutional order. Only at the price of this mediation and translation, by “white” people who testified, by social workers who reframed their words into legal language, and by a local elected official

who brought the complaint to the ears of the precinct captain, was a form of communication established between the holders of public force and the public of the event, between the values of the order of interaction and the values of the institutional public order.

The role of the street in mobilizing a public against the police

What do these street corner interactions “reveal for those who study public good and the impulse of public morality” (Joseph 2002: 90)? The analysis of this scene gives us a first-hand measure of the effects that two concurrent trends have on the work of the police in French urban public space. On the one hand, informal and survival street trade is growing in the working class neighborhoods of Paris (Milliot 2012a). Street peddling is one of the “public problems” repeatedly discussed at neighborhood meetings. The reaction of local elected officials to this phenomenon described as “out of the ordinary” and “very worrisome as regard to security and illegal occupation of space as well as the poverty of the population given to these activities” (Paris Municipal Council, May 10-11, 2010) is a quasi-unanimous call for repression. In the eastern *arrondissements*, issues of circulation and cleanliness bring local councils to demand police reinforcement from the prefecture of Paris.⁸ In response to these calls, the police prefect reminded them that more than 10,000 tickets had been written for unauthorized street selling in 2009 and declared that police work would not be a sufficient problem response. Indeed, police repression has occurred at all overflowing informal markets, and has only pushed the vendors and their related “problems” to other places. During the summer of 2012, the Goutte d’Or neighborhood, which is particularly affected by the development of street vending, was targeted by the secretary of domestic affairs (*ministre de l’intérieur*) as a “Security Priority Area.” The police are now more mobilized to enforce rules of cleanliness and circulation against occupations of the sidewalks by informal markets.

On the other hand, the police have been under pressure by the government to improve statistics (of custodies, arrests, crime solving, etc.), which modifies police work on the ground by reducing their ability to interpret the diversity of situations they encounter (Mucchielli 2008; Mouhanna 2009). Faced with activities at the legal margins, police officers are less and less able to act as “good professionals” (Bearman 2005). In other words, they are less and less able to adjust the legal frame of their mission to local contexts and situations. As Fabien Jobard (2002) showed, this tendency, when applied to immigrant and working-class neighborhoods and populations easily produces police blunders and shootings. In fact, many “incidents” of police violence have happened in the last few years in la Goutte d’Or.

Inhabitants and local elected officials logged several complaints with the National Deontology Police Commission against police wrongdoings in the neighborhood. The most famous is the 2007 case of a young woman of sub-Saharan origin, obviously pregnant, who was beaten in public and then taken into custody

without access to a lawyer, because she was selling fruit without a license. Here too, the mechanism of public indignation showed the growing opposition between the public order of the street and the institutional public order, the moral order of small street trade and the legal order. NGO Amnesty International used this incident in its 2009 report on French Police entitled, "Police Officers Above the Law." To respond to government demands and repress informal street trade, police officers are pushed to overlook even the republican principles that legitimate their action.

One might think that the choices made by officers on the ground, following the process of hierarchic inversion, which lets lower ranking officers take the initiative (Monjardet 1996), could be controlled or at least contained by higher ranking officers and police administrators. But the contrary is happening. Their actions are legitimated, if not condoned. Almost none of the complaints logged with the Inspection Service of National Police (IGPN) have resulted in sanctions. Almost all have been dismissed. Blunders are thus in a way legalized after the fact by the State (Mohammed and Mucchielli 2006), which rubber-stamps the rupture between the police and the city. Finally, the law itself has been recently changed to provide more power to police agents. The vote of LOPPSI 2 (*loi d'orientation et de programmation pour la performance de la sécurité intérieure*) at the National Assembly, on February 18, 2010, and its ratification by the Constitutional Council a year later, transforms unlicensed street selling from an offense to a misdemeanor. The penalty changed accordingly from a ticket to a six-month prison sentence and a 7500 euro fine. With this law, the translation of the public perspective into the language of institutions may well become inaudible to the State and its administrations. One can wonder about the justification, in a period of economic crisis and growing poverty, of such an apparatus of repression of informal street vending that criminalizes the poorest and systematically pits its police and its institutional order against inhabitants and the public order of interaction. Research in US cities points to similar use of repressive strategies (Low and Smith 2006; McArdle and Erzen 2001). The impulse behind them may be diverse, but one point illustrated here could probably apply generally: the general diffidence towards regulatory principles of the public interaction order.

Finally, this incident provides insights into an emerging and shared conception of justice. The catalyst here is the emotion provoked by a situation perceived as intolerable. The indignation that brought together passers-by, inhabitants and visitors, during the event, crossed social categories – "white" middle class which we represented and an immigrant population of diverse ethnic and class origins represented by women and men who pushed us to testify and press charges in the name of all. This is not a form of universal cosmopolitanism but rather a pluralist ethics, built *in situ* during the interactions in urban public space. This argument reaches back to the relationship between emotions and the city. According to Collins (2001), to get engrossed in specific emotional dynamics, people must be ready. They need to have a compatible "conscience constituency" (Collins 2001: 31), which gives them an orientation similar to that of the

social movement. Here, in addition to already existing tensions between the local immigrant population and the police and to a sentiment of belonging to a community of conditions, the principles of the interaction order of public space have provided a common axiological grammar (Lemieux 2009). As the principles of the public interaction order are applied, reworked and adopted by all, they can serve as a setting for common reactions to events that disturb the ongoing urban order. This event thus shows that there can be strong moral and political dimensions attached to the simple ability of denizens to share the space of the street and that these values can indeed, as Tarde had theorized, link together the crowd and the public as two successive forms of social organizations aimed at social change.

But these values are rarely visible. They are not only seldom expressed, because it is difficult to get indignant on the street, but they are also ephemeral, as emerging expressions remain in the realm of speech. For values to be shared in the immediate circle, events need to be strong enough to provoke instant mobilization. To spread beyond the gathering, they need to give way to a narration that can carry emotions through time. Here we have observed the almost instant passage of a shared emotion to a collective action, and how this dynamic feeds off the problematic disjunction of two public orders in urban public space, in the rift widening between the values upon which publics form and act and the principles that motivate State Police action. If public space is the pulse of urban societies, this incident provides us a measure of the fault lines that divide them and that could push them toward greater democracy.

Notes

- 1 Conservative representative and chief of staff for the ministry of domestic affairs, Jean-Pierre Bloch, initiated in 1978 a policy of securitization of the neighborhood (closure of brothels, arrests of street vendors). He declared to the press: "Harlem will not exist in Paris," "I will break la Goutte d'Or" and "the police must take control of la Chapelle-Goutte d'Or" (*Le Monde*, July 26, 1978).
- 2 It was designated this way because of unhealthy housing conditions and high indexes of poverty (28 percent of household income is below poverty level, 33 percent of the population are single parent families, 15 percent is eligible for Medicaid). See report by l'Observatoire des quartiers prioritaires, 2010, APUR, Ville de Paris.
- 3 See Tonnelat's (2007) work on Times Square, New York, for a similar reaction to the police by peddlers.
- 4 Minutes available at: www.mairie18.paris.fr/mairie18/document?id=14680.
- 5 Field notes from the public meeting "Vos libertés, votre sécurité. Parlons-en ensemble" at the City Hall of the eighteenth *arrondissement*, April 29, 2009 (21 h).
- 6 For two years, an organization called CLAP or Collectif contre les abus policiers (Collective against police abuse) has published a chronicle of police repression of street vending in the neighborhood.
- 7 This event happened as we were taking a tour of the neighborhood with a group of ethnology students and colleagues. A good proportion of that group was "white" and more educated than most neighborhood residents.
- 8 The *préfecture* is under the authority of the National Secretary for Domestic Affairs. The city of Paris does not have a municipal police force.

References

- Amnesty International (2009) *France, des policiers au-dessus des lois*, London: Amnesty International Publications. Available at: <http://www.amnesty.fr/Documents/Rapport-France-Des-policiers-au-dessus-des-lois> [accessed 20 November 2012].
- Anderson, E. (2011) *The Cosmopolitan Canopy: Race and Civility in Everyday Life*, New York: W.W. Norton & Co.
- Bearman, P. (2005) *Doormen*, Chicago: University Of Chicago Press.
- Bromley, R. (2000) "Street Vending and Public Policy: A Global Review," *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 20(1/2): 1–28.
- Le Bon, G. (1895) *Psychologie des Foules*, Paris: Felix Alcan.
- Camerati, N. (2006) "La 'performance' de la police dans l'espace public," *Sociétés* 94(4): 77–90.
- Collins, R. (2001) "Social Movements and the Focus of Emotional Attention," in J. Goodwin, J. M. Jasper, and F. Polletta (eds) *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Cross, J. C. (1998) *Informal Politics: Street Vendors and the State in Mexico City*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Dulong, R. (1998) *Le témoin oculaire: les conditions sociales de l'attestation personnelle*. Paris: EHESS.
- Favre, P. (2009) "Quand la police fabrique l'ordre social. Un en deçà des politiques publiques de la police ?," *Revue française de Science politique*, 59(6):1231–48.
- Goffman, E. (1963) *Behavior in Public Places; Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Gourdon, J.L. (2001) *La rue. Essai sur l'économie de la forme urbaine*, La Tour-d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube.
- Gusfield, J. R. (1984) *The Culture of Public Problems: Drinking-Driving and the Symbolic Order*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hunter, A. (1985) "Private, Parochial and Public Social Orders: The Problem of Crime and Incivility in Urban Communities." In G. Suttles and M. Zald (eds) *The Challenge of Social Control: Citizenship and Institution Building in Modern Society – Essays in Honor of Morris Janowitz*, NJ: Aldex Publishing.
- Jasper, J. M. (1998) "The Emotions of Protest: Affective and Reactive Emotions in and Around Social Movements." *Sociological Forum*, 13(3): 397–424.
- Jasper, J. M. (2011) "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology*, 37(1): 285–303.
- Jobard, F. (2002) *Bavures Policières. La force publique et ses usages*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Joseph, I. (2001) "Tarde avec Park." *Multitudes*, 4(7): 212–20.
- Joseph, I. (2002) "Pluralisme et contiguïtés." In *L'héritage du pragmatisme. Conflits d'urbanité et épreuves de civisme*, Cefai Daniel et Joseph Isaac (dir), La Tour-d'Aigues: Éditions de l'Aube.
- Joseph, I. (2007) Parcours: Simmel, l'écologie urbaine et Goffman. In D. Cefai and C. Saturno (eds) *Itinéraire d'un pragmatiste*, Paris: Economica.
- Katz, J. (2002) "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (part 2)." *Ethnography* 3(1): 63–90.
- Lallement E. (2010) *La ville marchande: enquête à Barbès*, Paris: Editions Téraèdre.
- Lemieux, C. (2009) *Le devoir et la grâce*, Paris: Economica.
- Lofland, L.H. (1998) *The Public Realm: Exploring the City's Quintessential Social Territory*, Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.

- Low, S.M. (2000) *On the Plaza: The Politics of Public Space and Culture*, Austin: University of Texas Press.
- Low, S. and Smith, N. (2006) *The Politics of Public Space*, New York: Routledge.
- McArdle, A. and Erzen, T. (2001) *Zero Tolerance: Quality of Life and the New Police Brutality in New York City*, NYU Press.
- Milliot, V. (2012a) "Indignations et mobilisations autour des marchés de la pauvreté à Paris." Forthcoming in *les Annales de la recherche urbaine*.
- Milliot, V. (2012b) "Pluralist Ambiance and Urban Socialisation: Ethnography of Public Space in the Goutte d'Or Neighbourhood of Paris." *Ambiances. International Journal of Sensory Environment, Architecture and Urban Space / Revue Internationale sur l'Environnement Sensible, l'Architecture et l'Espace Urbain*, 1.
- Mohammed, M. and Mucchielli, L. (2006) "La police dans les Quartiers Populaires : un vrai problème!" *Mouvements* 2: 58-66.
- Montjardet, D. (1996) *Ce que fait la police. Sociologie de la Force Publique*, Paris: La Découverte.
- Mouhanna, C. (2009) "Politique du chiffre et police des étrangers." *Plein droit*, (3): 3-6.
- Mucchielli, L. (2008) "Le nouveau management de la sécurité à l'épreuve : délinquance et activité policière sous le ministère Sarkozy (2002-2007)." *Champ pénal/Penal field. Nouvelle revue internationale de criminologie*, Vol. V. Online. Available at: <http://champpenal.revues.org/3663>, [accessed 20 November 2012].
- Park, R.E. (1972) *The Crowd and the Public, and Other Essays*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Rawls, A.W. (1987) "The Interaction Order Sui Generis: Goffman's Contribution to Social Theory." *Sociological Theory*, 5(2):136-49.
- Tarde, G. (1901) *L'opinion et la foule*, Paris: Felix Alcan.
- Tonnelat, S. (2007) "Keeping Space Public: Times Square (New York) and the Senegalese Peddlers." *Cybergeo*, article 367. Online. Available at: <http://www.cybergeo.eu/index4792.html> [accessed 20 November 2012].
- Tonnelat, S. (2010) "Walking to the Subway: The Ambiguity of Public Social Norms at Work in and Around Subway Stations in New York City." Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association meeting, New Orleans, November 17.
- Toubon, J.-C., Messamah, K. (1990) *Centralité immigrée. Le quartier de la Goutte d'Or, Paris*, Paris: L'Harmattan.