"From transparency to criminal visibility in a street level bureaucracy, the Portuguese Police"

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Paper prepared for the EASA Biennial Conference in Ljubljana, Slovenia 26-30 August, 2008.

Work in progress

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Introduction

This paper aims to study particular aspects of the engineering of Portuguese police force policy and adaptable bureaucratic changes to it. Policy can be defined as an "art, method, or tactics of government [and police administration] and regulating internal order" (Partridge, 1958: 509; Shore & Wright, 1997: 19). Hyatt (1997) shows that neo-liberal governments have re-introduced the association between policy and policing. These spheres were apparently separate since the formation of Robert Peel's "new police" in London (1829) and to a certain extent, the modernisation of police organizations in Europe in the late nineteenth century.

Opacity has been approached in classical and recent literature by police theorists who tend to emphasise it and hold police forces accountable (Tonry & Morris, 2003; Palacios Cerezales, 2005). In anthropology however discussions surround the domains of bureaucratic *transparency*, the recent developed "policy-making processes" demanding a "studying through" institutions and organizations (Shore & Wright, 1997: 14). Special attention has also been given to the effects of a widespread "audit culture", the ways of practising or conducting "accountability" (Strathern, 2000: 2).

Although opacity is underlined in police studies, I believe that the focus should rather be put on *visibility* and the ways this policy gains form beyond the so called process of making the police more transparent. I will show how the Portuguese police force produce visibility in two strategic ways: on street level policing and in criminal statistics. I conclude that both processes, especially the "statistics-making", can serve its opposite purpose, underlining opacity instead of the so intended transparency of the police force.

Main discussions about a street level bureaucracy: the police force

Most studied aspects related to police bureaucracy and work can not escape a dense reflection about policy-making roles of street-level bureaucrats: their relatively high degrees of discretion, inspite all the regulatory, legal and administrative apparatus, and the consequently relative autonomy from organizational authority (Lipsky, 1980).

Several authors, in police theoretical approaches, have argued that there are certain patterns of conduct, levels of conformity in police work, selective enforcement and manoeuvres from below to top policing (see for example Klockars, 1985). Classical

policing theory, with empirical examples from around the world (especially from Anglo-Saxon countries), has been embedded with the practice of police units autonomy regarding governmental demands. The social agency of patrolmen has been acknowledged, even within legalist and criminologist circles (Dias & Andrade, 1997). Inside police forces, there is an evident gap between the "cop culture" and "management culture", in the bottom and top level of the professional hierarchy (Reuss-Ianni & Ianni, 1983).

In recent studies there has been a turn in the main argument about police action focused on "territorial selective enforcement", more frequent and effective than the usual individual selectiveness (based on race differences, gender and age). Different neighbourhoods deserve different forms of governmental policies and forms of policing that tend to be "naturalised" as the real necessary ones, and with the subsequent effect of penalising poverty urban areas (Cunha, 2008). In many middle class neighbourhoods of European and North American cities, the focus is on routine patrol work and permanent visibility. In others, like migrant, poor and with identified street drug-dealing spots neighbourhoods, the goal is on a "ceremonial" and reinforced police visibility, what Wacquant (2004) calls the security "*mise-en-scène*", but in different ways. In this territorial selective enforcement process we can observe in police institutions a general displacement in all the apparatus, uniforms and equipment: from blue to black; from yardstick to shotguns; from patrol car with two officers to big and para-military cars with numerous groups of policemen.

But social sciences, and specially anthropologists, have looked to police organizations from an outside perspective, based on a critical view of patrol and street work. Even the study of policing the risk, in a risk society (Ericson & Haggerty, 1997), considered a change of paradigm in police studies (Punch, 1999), tends to locate the problematic in the effects of higher and technological forms of policing. The starting point and well argued discussion is about "police mandate", the limits of strategies and tactics (Manning, 1978b), the "politics of the police" (Reiner, 1998); and the implementation of policy and social accountabilities (Bayley, 1979). In police organizations discretion is not an extra problem, it's the main one. As Lipsky says: "The essence of street-level bureaucracies is that they require people to make decisions about other people" (1980: 160).

Less studied have been the accordingly and stronger liaisons between governmental policy and police practices from an ethnographic stand point, in a time

when “audit cultures” (*idem*) with its national particularities are more explicit than ever. New forms of policy and auditing reinforce the “governance”, as Foucault (1991) conceptualized it, as a “political technology”, in which power and accountability have become simultaneously more individualizing and totalizing. Policies, with an apparent neutral language and expert knowledge can establish codified moral principles for society. They have also implicit models of society with a combination of external “subjection” and internal “subjectification” (Rabinow, 1984; Shore & Wright, 1997: 9). In the next section I explore the ways ethnography can be useful to study policy and audit cultures within the Portuguese police force.

Ethnography of police transparency/opacity

The ethnographic approach advises us to look *inside* organizations (Gellner & Hirsch, 2001), but still keeping the wider picture in mind. “Organizations” and “cultures” are always on the make, in its practices, discourses, power and ideologies (Durão, 2008b; Wright, 1994; Shore & Wright, 1997). And “... much of the work of organizing is to make... fragmented activities appear coherent, so it can be claimed that an intention has been realized and a successful result achieved” (Shore & Wright, 1997: 5). So, state itself is not a “solid thing” (Das & Poole, 2004: 19). It is constructed by laws, bureaucracies, rumours and violence. We must agree again with Shore and Wright when they say that “... policy has become a major institution of Western and international governance, on a par with other key organizing concepts such as ‘family’ and ‘society’... Policies are inherently and unequivocally *anthropological* phenomena” (*idem*: 6-7).

Whoever makes ethnography inside a police organization and at an itinerant street-level work, identifies a first level of political opacity: the activities of policing are not what they seem to be, or even what should be. As Manning (1978b) puts it: policing is a “game of manipulative appearances” in a neo-liberal changing order, since the vast domain of its mandate is impossible to manage. Perhaps the variation, the complexity, and the sense of discovering what is not publicly revealed, the secret uses of “legitimate violence” (Weber, 1964) in practice, are ingredients for the literary and social sciences fascination, the *leitmotif* for facing the difficulties implied in the study of such hard social universes. In those places researchers experience the discovering of the most denied knowledges, “secrets”, “tactical secrets”, or as Mitchell has well defined:

"resource-focused secrets... used to conceal information that if revealed to competitors might result in loss of privileged access to value material assets" (1993: 9). In the case of the police we can see a competition in the "political field" (Bourdieu, 1991) for a political and professional mandate definition on crime. "Crime" is, these days, a very powerful "mobilizing metaphor" (Wright, 1993, cit in Shore and Wright, 1997: 20) to the police but also to national governments (as I will consider later in this paper).

In my case I've studied the urban police force in Portugal, the state security police (*Polícia de Segurança Pública*) for my PhD thesis (concluded in 2006). I've focused the study on street policemen practices in metropolitan Lisbon area, considered by all as the "school of policing" – the locus of the main police professional experience in a national context. Almost all recruited policemen work several years in the capital before going to other smaller cities. My interest in Lisbon policing was defined also by the fact that the "project of proximity" to citizens was being implemented there at least for ten years. For the first time someone from outside, named as a "civilian", asked for a whole year pass for permanent observation and routine participation in precincts and street work. It took several months of waiting before the official authorisation came through, in part due to the fact of the clear absence of interest manifested by social sciences about Portuguese police themes, much more concentrated in crime fear and social perceptions (Fernandes, 2003; Machado, 2004).

Once in the precincts I've started to cope with undercover policemen, because I was not uniformed and policemen considered me somehow useful to the service. Just after I could participate and accompanied all the services and street routines. I interpreted the schemes to obtain street information, body and verbal dissimulation and disguise. I even describe how a "detention" is a socially and professionally production and may be induced for political reasons (Durão, 2008b, ch. 4). This is the same to say that a detention, like any police result, is fundamentally a social construct and a negotiation that involves social and cultural relations, and is maintained by intentional social actors. And, at a certain level, it is socially and publicly authorized for the police not to be entirely transparent in order to do the "dirty work" no one or other institution does. In all policemen and activities, in units and in the entire organization, "little street crime investigators" are the most charismatic ones, what shows the symbolic meaning of secrecy in context, tactical secret, and more specifically, resource-focused secrets.

However, a second level of opacity can be found when we start to do ethnography in different scales of policy decisions, tactics and methods: the institutional resistance to show to the ethnographer and to society in general how police data is produced. Nevertheless, is possible to follow the channels of decisions and paperwork, from the streets to several bureaucratic levels. According to policemen we live in a time where the traditional "power of arms" has been substituted by the "power of the pen". As policemen say: "The pen is our weapon" (Durão, 2008b: 226). In the last ten years the rationalization process of the Portuguese police is in its course, as part of a wider political and systemic process of organizing and "rationalizing" national state policies.

This relates to a turn in the Portuguese police historical context. During several decades of the so called "Estado Novo" (from 1933 to 1974), the Portuguese urban police force was militarised, authoritarian, very present in urban routines and well connected to the political police, named *PIDE* (Pimentel, 2007). Democratization, after the 1974's revolution, and specially with the Portuguese admission in the European Union in 1986 represented a turn in police policies, which implied a general demand for "modernization", transparency and consequent public services accountability. Some years later the management idiom would arrive to government and to the police force.

The ideas expressed in the police force reorganization, which took some years to be implemented (at the end of the millennium), were to invest in government control of the "public security system"; penal legislation; personnel professionalization; transparent and "modern" bureaucracy. Accordingly to this context, one of the main concerns of most recent national governments has been not only to make sure the police work and bureaucracy are more accountable, and in a certain way more governmentalized and centralized in its policies than ever, but also to guarantee that Portugal still is a peaceful "world" to live in, reinforcing nation-state symbols. In this case, there is a certain model of society implicit in the policy. The idea is to produce an image of a country that having the benefits of belonging to the European Union doesn't manifests the criminal and violent problems of several of its other country members (like the near Spain, with ETA and regionalist problems).

Portuguese criminal environment has been celebrated as a pacific one. The *brandos costumes* (mild-tempered customs) is an expression much used to define the Portuguese "people". This expression goes back to the nineteenth century, but is maintained and rhetorically used by several contemporary twentieth century governments (right or left wing). And, for example, the "urban violence" concept, rarely

shows up when applied to Portuguese urban areas, even in the most popular forms of mass media. Studies have showed that the increment of moral panic and insecurity perceptions socially manifested does not correlate with criminal facts (Machado, 2004). In 2007, in the "Global Peace Index", *The Economist* presents Portugal as one of the most secure countries of the world. Among 121 nations, the country ranks the position nine, with very little rates of violent criminality registered.[1] Recently, in 2008, the country was considered even more safe.[2]

Nevertheless, some years ago started to hit the news what can be called the "non-national" crimes and disorders, located at the "precarious neighbourhoods" (*bairros precários*), rapidly transformed in "dangerous neighbourhoods and slums" (*bairros perigosos*), like if crime just occurs at "the margins of the state" (Das & Poole, 2004; Durão, 2008c). Despite the inner heterogeneity that has transformed Portugal into a multiethnic and multicultural country in no more than fifteen years, with intense fluxes of immigration, the governmental speech and policies tend to underline the idea of an homogenous and inner controlled country, at least in its moral principles, like a society that resists to crime raise. Crime is mostly identified as something that comes from abroad, with certain types of subjects, non-Portuguese and non-citizens (Seabra & Santos, 2005).

One of the most used "rhetorical device" (Shore & Wright, 1997: 18), a very famous government policy document – the Annual Report of Domestic Security (*Relatório Anual de Segurança Interna*) – says that Portuguese criminality inverts global tendencies, offering a "particularly privileged position" to the country (2006: 46).[3] It is important to notice that through these documents some people have the "power to define dominant discourses" (Shore & Wright, 1997: 18) and to encapsulate other complex and competing realities, that tend to be viewed as marginalizing alternatives. As I will demonstrate further in the paper the policy process described tend to shift from transparency to institutional visibility.

[1] http://www.economist.com/markets/rankings/displaystory.cfm?story_id=9425707; viewed in 22.07.2008.
[2] http://www.visionofhumanity.org/gpi/results/rankings.php; viewed in 22.07.2008.
[3] It is considered that in Portugal, between 1996 and 2006, the criminal rates by 1000 persons has increased only 2,3%. The values are considered low even when compared to other European countries with higher criminal rates than in Portugal but still considered low (4% and 6%) (*idem*: 51).

From transparency to visibility

We could say that the Police and respective government generally respond at three forms and levels of political pressure: i) national and social audiences – what is called the public opinion, a very open and blur abstraction of "what citizens want from the police"; ii) what local city dwellers require; and iii) national and European bureaucratic demands. But the policy strategies are progressively designed from top to bottom to respond to certain governmental, European Union and global demands – the fixation of the (complex and plural) mandate of the police in crime. This is also the most contemporary popular abstraction about police mandate.[4]

In Portuguese police context *crime* is classified as what follows the judicial and political channels, a fact that deserves a certain level of investigation in order to be judged and accounted. It is a fact classified with an identification number of crime-process. The bureaucratic creation of this classificatory number (*número único de identificação de processo-crime*) has not many years. The innovation started to be discussed at the beginning of the 90's in the judicial system, by the direction of judiciary informatization (*Gabinete Director da Informatização Judiciária,* 1991). By suggestion of the Home Office Chief-Inspection (*IGAI*), responsible for the direct accountability and control of the police activities and finances, in 1996 this measure would be introduced in all precincts. The justification was to make more agile the administration of crime-processes. Police criminal numbers go to the Public Prosecutor's Office and other judicial entities. At the level of police organization and the executive power they allow a selection of criminal indicators and the statistic account. Inside the police force this statistic classification opened the possibility to underline all the criminal dynamic of police work what offers to the populations a selective reading about what is police work.

Nevertheless, the biggest impact of police work is maintained in activities that are not classified as crime. For example, in Lisbon's police registrations we can find

[4] This criminal turn in police work is more explicit after 9/11 terrorist events, but has started even before (Manning, 2004). Historically, this relates to a certain subversion of Peel's mandate (created in a European context) by the United States, a criminalized interpretation of the police mandate that comes to influence policing in the entire globe (Manning, 1978a). But what history and contextual analyses have demonstrated is that policing is all about a big variety and complex street work that was left to the police in the professional system of social labour division (Cumming, Cumming & Edell, 1973).

that no more than 20% are crime or crime related occurrences. But only criminal occurrences are treated as *facts*, since only they enter the channels of accountable treatment. Not to speak about the enormous percentage of police routine and contextual work that is never and will never be written... In this process, the biggest amount of police work is transformed in local ownership, never leaves precincts, and tends to rest in each policeman. This "knowledge" tends to be more and more devaluated and ignored in the context of patrol routine work and planning, since the planning is to respond more and more to bureaucratic political demands and less to local concrete demands. Needless to say that it is in course a policy with a major social impact, a political selection *in* and *through* policing that makes *visible* only some parts of police work, while other determinant parts are made *invisible*.

At the same time, as a kind of counter-hegemonic policing ideology, but relatively popular as well, shows up "Police Proximity" (also known as "Police Community" in Anglo-Saxon countries), revealing that these processes of policy production are not linear and find "expert" demands and reactions. This has been considered the most innovative and contextual pertinent project of the late twentieth century police. It is a larger philosophy that is affecting the professional police organizations in the world. In a broader sense this has been called the "silent revolution" of the police (Matrofski, 2002). Portugal could not escape this wave, inspired by the French translation of the original Anglo-Saxon community policing models (Oliveira, 2001). In Lisbon, and afterwards in the entire country, when its first policies were created and implemented like "pilot tests" by the Minister of the Interior, Alberto Costa (1996, 2002), the police proximity model seemed to fit like a glove. There was a history and a political rhetoric of few crime rates and pacific environment (as I described earlier). Proximity had everything to be a "mobilising metaphor" (*idem*), and rhetorically it still is one of the major terms of reference to the police force used by national governments since then. But the model was not paramount. The policing philosophy has arrived at Portugal later than in other countries (in the late 90's, not in the late 70's), when the police criminal mandate turn was in its way in Europe. Police proximity has never been effectively implemented and less accounted. In its short history, even before being a policing "model" or a "system", it has been strictly maintained as parallel "projects" or "programs" to patrol traditional work.[5]

[5] The official proximity programs are focused on school communities, elder people, commerce, and in a very timid way crime victims and domestic violence support.

The proximity partnerships have a partial presence in precincts and still represent a limited part of the general patrol work, which tends to be separately organized, with different time-schedules, with a major number of police officers (more than 90% of all the precinct personnel). Proximity is, nevertheless, a very disputed idea for the police, ambiguous, and a non-consensual definition. In the ethnography of police contexts, from top to bottom, I have found at least five different senses in use for this policing concept. – 1. For many it represents an unnecessary and obstructive model of police, since the organization should be maintained itself distant, closed and paramilitary: police as crime control and secretive work. 2. For most operational chief commanders proximity is a mere tactic of policing, used in order to obtain information and act upon reality (an instrumental use that subverts the original policing model, dislocating the same from preventive to proactive goals). 3. For the majority of street-level workers, proximity is seen like a policing "technique", nothing more than traditional patrol itinerant work. 4. For many it is considered an innovative model, but only applicable to specific programs. 5. And, at last, paradoxically, just for a minority of police bureaucrats and policemen on the streets this is a global project, a new police philosophy, but far from implementation in Portugal (see Oliveira, 2003).

I believe the selective process of police policies in crime is at the origin of the inter-related forms of *visibility strategies* we can observe in street-level policing and policy selective priorities.

At a certain point in the police force was created the general idea of "visibility in the streets". Some years ago the "visible car" (*carro visível*) was implemented, complementary to the work of the traditional "patrol car" (but not so operational). It has also been growing the expression and power of the so called "units of rapid intervention" (*brigadas de acção rápida*). The basic idea is: policemen must be seen in the streets and act "individually" and as a "body of individuals". At this level, the definition of visibility maintains the ambiguity with proximity, as a general police attitude toward citizens, but it is something entirely different, not near the original communicational-centred and social service philosophies of proximity.

On another level, there have been an increasing of crime statistics control. This is considered the real technological innovation, since it's said to measure the police work and results, a "product" oriented policy – and at this sense a real auditing process,

as Strathern and other authors describe it (2000). The idea is that finally the police is being accountable. The statistics control has been implemented even before the arrival of a digital integrated system in late 2004, the shared identification data basis of the two major national polices: the urban police force and the rural police force (named *GNR*).

Both strategies have postponed the proximity project, even if it still is rhetorically celebrated in many ways and always maintained as a future promise. At this point what I am trying to argue is that in the recent historical process of police administration and of production of "transparency" there is a certain dislocation from *proximity from citizens* to a general ideal-practice of police *visibility to citizens*. And all of this in the name of *crime fight*.

Since the interest here is to go *through* the main impact of government and police bureaucratic strategies, I will go deeper in the interpretation of what street policemen and local chief commanders call "the statistics policy". In the next section I examine the process of "performance statistics" (Strathern, 2000: 7) that produce crime visibility.

Crime statistics-making

Foucault's analysis of the rationality of government, what he called "governmentally", was the starting point for understanding how modern systems of power work (1991). "The invention of statistics and the development of economics as a distinctive level of reality were key instruments that [made possible]... a normative rationality: self-contained and nontheoretical, geared to efficiency and productivity" (Rabinow, 1984, 20; cit in Shore & Wright, 1997: 30). But we can also see the statistic process as a way of policy selection, not only of population control. The statistic itself can be the object of an anthropological inquiry.

In Portuguese contexts criminal statistics are the spotlight of the moment and occupy the main operational police work, even in precincts. They deserve a whole policy engineering. Statistics are isolated from the global facts reported to the police or by the police (i.e. 20% of the entire registered pieces). They are monthly counted and defined at the precinct level, by local operational commanders; afterwards discussed and studied by commanders in a upper level, in police divisions districts. The numbers go to the respective metropolitan commands, and then gathered at the Headquarters of the police. Finally, it is a general security co-ordinator organism, dependent of the Home

Office, which is responsible for the writing of a political analysis of the entire criminal data.

While observing the street work it is not surprising that what makes statistics grow is the increment of collective local police operations. Every month, specially near the end, when there is an accounting review of the numbers, commanders organize extra-routine operations strategically oriented to alcohol and drugs control, specially located in urban spots or neighbourhoods where they think these activities are more expectable. Operations, in order to be efficient, require "voluntary" policemen, extra-time work. It started with one once operation per month, but today there are some precincts that have highly increased this number. It is not yet a routine activity because of the administrative diligence the whole operational apparatus requires.

At the same time, routine patrol work and local planning policing deserve fewer interest and a general lack of attention. The levels of vertical and horizontal communication inside precincts, and from this level to all the police institutional structure, are not considered to be relevant, since "everyone must do it's own work". In theory, each policeman "is equipped" with the power to patrol, register and sign his processes, even if work practice reveals many contradictory questions, training and professional difficulties.

Crime must appear, and anti-crime operations must be visible, even if crime resists to be seen in the most populated Portuguese urban contexts. This "operation-dependable data", with its statistic results, is confronted with participation and crime-denunciation data. From this process results a kind of "mathsemantics" (MacNeal, 1994) that governments produce and analyse. In this sense, like Shore and Wright advance: "More successful regimes engineer conditions so that, seemingly, consent of the public comes 'naturally'... it becomes incontestable, inviolable and beyond political debate" (1997: 24). Statistics on crime is a powerful "political technology" (Foucault, 1991).

But we can go further in the way policy affects policing. We verify a feedback flow where a strategic proactive policy nourishes proactive police tactics (very occult in police official discourses). Proactive tactics are characterised by the fact they don't need accusation or report to the police to be put in practice; using the combination of undercover and uniformed policemen, in order to detect crime while is on its course, sometimes with policemen participation in it (Black, 1978). As a philosophy, proactive strategy is on the opposite side of proximity strategy, but it may use tactical instruments

of the latter. The irony is how governments, jurists and police administrators use the proactive term as a positive definition, once more dealing with its ambiguous connection to a general attitude of proximity between state and citizens. But as I focused, in police theory, the proactive policing is something very different in its purposes and tactics. The point being that proactive police work can be called not only by corporate discretion, but whenever the state formal policies pressures demands it. As Lipsky remind us: "Whenever management undertakes to concentrate on measuring a dimension of performance [in this case statistics policy and auditing] workers correctly accept this as a signal of management priority. A problem is created, however, when the measure induces workers to reduce attention to other aspects of their jobs and when there is no control on the quality of work produced" (1980: 166). The proactive policing tends to obscure the more "citizen-approached" preventive policing or social orientated policing, the majority of police work.

On the contrary, the preventive model can be defined as a policing based on uniformed policemen, locally monitored; a policing planned to act reactively to the needs of singular or collective populations, and capable of rapid action to emergency requests. Both policy and strategic design (proximity and proactive) are expressed in alternative ways or in a way that one is working for the other. The point is: even if in the name of a general crime prevention rhetoric, the most representative, the growing and invested government and police management strategies and tactics are undoubtedly proactive. And this can be seen on policing practices whether upstream or downstream.

Upstream *statistics policy* demands an increasing attention to criminal numbers. One of the division district commanders I knew, when referring to his success in the police force told me he had obtained more "results" than ever in the territorial division level, and with fewer policemen than ever. He had been responsible for the implementation of an increased number of collective operations. This fact gave him a mention of honour by the metropolitan commander, his direct superior. The *results policy* is all about what is visible, what is seen as a "product" in police contexts. And the product is being socially constructed as having a more intense relation with police productivity and "real work".

Downstream *statistics audit* is the technology of "making numbers" visible and accountable. This is a selective way of presenting criminal facts as the "real facts", the most relevant facts deriving from policing activities (even if they contradict other ways of counting or other ways of "mathsementics" (*idem*). The "making numbers policy" is

produced in order to seem "natural". But, how Strathern (2000) and various authors defend, audit practices are "culture artefacts", where transparency is the integrity operation, while management is a globalized idiom of regulation and organization. Economic efficiency and good practices are being pursued, in the name of accountability. Production is subject to "rituals of verification" from outside (Strathern, 2000: 2-3). But what is new in the police case are not so much the instruments – statistics – but the patterned expectations they raise in a activity that it's much more plural and diverse than it seems and is presented to be.[6] What is new in Portuguese context is the underlying of crime orientation in the police mandate, statistics and the work of police subjects when crime is represented more as a menace than as a reality. In this sense, rituals of verification demand for "rituals of production and performance", since policemen themselves must act as if criminal numbers were the professional reality – making statistics publicly visible. The pressure goes down into the precincts: they must produce statistics, criminal ones, and this means that policemen must act in an area defined as "criminal", even if this area is not very clear. Policemen, as subjects of power, by themselves, don't obtain the expected criminal results. So, administrators, through operational and superior commanders, request from policemen the increment of collective operations, in order to make statistics grow.

This multilevel pressure creates new ethics and regulated codes on street-level professionals. The policy/audit process shows how a political technology engineering can be implemented in order to make the minor parts of police work visible (crime reports) and the majority of it invisible (all the non-classified work). This form of productive selectivity affects subjectivity and the mandate interpretations about what is police work. This can have an increment in police suspicion.

For the police "suspicion opposes and undermines trust" (Asad, 2004: 28). The increment of an attitude of suspicion, like it was argued by Talal Asad, does not function only in a one way direction, from the state towards its citizens in the margins, but also between states, and even inside each one of them. *Making statistics* leads to a competitive and suspicion work also between local commanders. They all seek more results, more "crime fights" than there are. One of the main reasons is that they are honoured by superiors and can expect career compensations and promotions if they

[6] In the first sociological monograph about policing in the United States of America Westley (1970) defends the enormous difficulty to classify police work in a simple list. The says that is practically impossible to show all the variety of professional responses demanded from policemen.

keep the “numbers policy” machine running, a sign of duty and dedication to the organization. As they all know, career resources in public services are being limited… As several commanders say: “We respond to society with numbers, with statistics”. Less convinced are policemen who deal with daily street routine work. They are much more cynic about the whole engineering process when they say: “We work more and more *for the* statistics: it’s the dictatorship of statistics policy”.

Crime “ethics”

As Lipsky states: “First, accountability is a relationship between people and groups. One is always accountable for *someone*, is not abstract... Second, accountability refers to [changeable] patterns of behaviour” (1980: 160). So, there is also an ethic and relational dimension printed in the whole process I have been describing. As the authors in “audit cultures” (2000) have expressed, audit is more than a policy, it interferes in subjects attitudes towards auditing themselves, and changes the practical ways of work. At this point we can talk about the social production of “audit subjectivity’s” in the police force. The idea policemen with few years of experience must have in mind is to produce more numbers, criminal numbers, specially in traffic and drug domains, and with proactive tactics operations, in order to benefit from the hegemonic policing representation of the present days and the inherent perks of a forced consensus. They have discovered the “aura of numbers” (Strathern, 2000: 8) inside and above the police institution. Policemen can contribute to the producing of political truths and realities, even if they can be tempted to reduce one of the most important aspects of practice: street-level and situational negotiation. This way they feel they are interpreting what police leaders and government want from them, not necessarily what policing is about. And even if several are cynic about that and many discuss privately what they consider to be police work, they are conscious about what is the main demand from them. Like in other institutional realms, there is an “emergent ethical consciousness at large”, not just new principles of organization but also new principles of what is to be a professional, new subjectivities and ways in which people govern themselves (Strathern, 2000: 280-289). This means a propagation of a certain idea of the police subject that even with most ambiguity must be internalized – a professional crime controller – not entirely coincident with practice and career reality.

In the history of urban Portuguese precinct contexts the policeman has not been a “crime fighter”. He is essentially a street-level bureaucrat, with certain degrees of discretion, with a multiple and complex social work, and, effectively, with very few opportunities to enter and resolve crime scenarios, or real risky and skilful situations. In Portugal we find traditionally a state that tends to be shut in its inner policies and ethos, not produced to be *visible*. We can easily find a logic and desire for being a state employee, but a limited ethos of public service. In this way we have been analysing ways of state auditing towards the *results*, not towards the *work processes*. This seems part of a scheme where state itself evades accountability and produces a kind of bureaucratic “indifference” (Herzfeld, 1992). At this point, it seems clear why police proximity, like government proximity and other forms of citizen/state relationship, is much more a rhetoric project than a practical one.

On a bureaucratic level, all the ideological and audit-oriented policy processes that want to make police criminal results more visible have a strange and paradoxical impact in working routine practices and professional careers. That impact shows how (in)predictable the results of state auditing in the police bureaucracy (and in the relations it entails with its employees) are in, at least, five inter-related points:

1. It reveals that policy “... function as a vehicle for distancing policy authors from the intended objects of policy” (Wright & Shore, 1997: 29), in many different ways: the government and policemen; the administrative police and the operational police; the police and citizens. This distance shows the governmental “illusion of standing above morality”, a process of “objectifying and universalising decision-making” (Shore & Wright, 1997: 10) that obscures the fact that effective policing practice is much less about crime than it is said and *written* to be. This is precisely what creates insurmountable symbolic power decision barriers, and rigid asymmetric power relationships inside the state, not the basis required for communication or proximity. In short, local level “police efficacy” may not be coincident with “policy efficacy”.

2. In the street-level action we observe the rising of proactive practices in police work (many of them considered unethical or anti-professional and of difficult accountability by nature). Crime may not be expressive, but it must appear in policing work and written reports...

3. The effect may be the underlining of some non-accountable practices of the police institution (the first level of political opacity I have described above). The police institution offers more written and public “honours”, and effective career opportunities,

to those who are more focused on crime street work, on one hand, and to intellectual police superiors that never stepped the streets.

4. As consequent, we observe a general devaluation of routine patrol work, not conceived by policy and police managers as the "real criminal work"... Effectively, on one hand, recent laws and organizational investment were made in the specialized area of criminal investigation. On the other hand, there is an intense movement of policemen that makes Lisbon precincts to be called "passage precincts". Personnel is constantly changing, what makes much more difficult any kind of local policing planning, proximity, and the development of policing local and contextual dependent knowledge, considered the real knowledge of the police by patrolmen. Not to mention that besides the legal knowledge policemen consider necessary to their work an amount of social and local knowledge like: toponimic, topographic, itinerant, relational and citizen-networking arrangements (Durão, 2008a). Even if police institutional ideology expects much from policemen, there are some oral expressions that show how their situation is not quite valued at the present time. For example, in some occasions, ironically, policemen call each other *Zé Patrulha* (something we could translate as "Patrol Joe"), derived from the Portuguese *Zé ninguém* ("John Doe"). They say vividly: "Here at the police force we are numbers, we are treated as numbers". Early in their careers patrolmen manifest the desire to "run from patrol work". In the streets, they say, they can only do little (criminal) work, and they cannot innovate or receive professional value, where career opportunities are diminished by a very rigid and hierarchical structure of opportunities.

5. Knowledge in the police is thus changing. "To know" in this context is not so much about local manifestations or induced territory signs as it used to be. With the intense personnel transfer between precincts of the whole country, there is less and less time for policemen to accomplish local knowledge. But the main obstacle remains in proactive goals introduced by the statistic selective policy measurements that take much operational time, in order to produce professional and institutional visibility. Forms of auditing endorse a particular reading about what "producing" knowledge is about (Strathern, 2000: 287). Policemen tend to create distance from police street knowledge, even if they continue to act in it.

Concluding remarks

Police organizations are one of the most interesting street-level bureaucracies when we want to study policy and audit cultures. On one hand the police mandate competes for control and order metaphors and practices for society. On the other hand they compete for social service and proximity to communities/societies metaphors and practices. That is why these organizations can never be entirely unified or plural, but rather live within the tension between both of them (Durão, 2008b). This ambivalence defies the control pretensions of policy makers and makes it more difficult to create and implement general consensus and transparent audit cultures. Visibility is, perhaps, the main expression of police transparency governments can achieve.

Regarding the police we can say transparency is more of a metaphor and less of a policy. The process of producing selective data, underlining crime control related activities and opting for indicators that speak numerically about crime is what makes a policy become visible while putting the focus on police and government as institutions. Visibility is the policy. As some policemen say: "Policing is about what is socially and politically visible… not about what we really do". At this point numbers are produced as reality. A certain mathsemantics is the way. The idea is to join groups of things that can be numbered in order to obtain a certain meaning. Criminal statistics are offered as settings of reality, as the "visible" Portugal: an "essentially" old, safe and calm country.

Punch (1979) once said that the police is like a "secret social service". What is locally viewed is socially unknown. Auditing, as I've been describing, tend to explore the quantifiable and selective police work on crime. This means that when policy looks for transparency it can find more and more opacity and tend to underline the secrecy dimension of this secret social service – which, finally, has the opposite effect on the principle and demanded role of policy and auditing: transparency. "Audit visibility" is not the same as "professional or social visibility". And the two sides of the coin can even be contradictory.

Most police work is not classified as crime, but work on crime is more valued by administrators and politicians, from the perspective of who really has the power to decide. And these are the ones who produces written policy documents, who narrates the organization (Schwartzman, 1993) with its "rhetorical devices", and who "persuade and control audiences" (Grillo, 1989; Parkin, 1984; Shore & Wright, 1997: 18). The contradiction the "policy of statistics" produces inside the police work and its selective

accountable procedures tends to delay a research analysis and a wider debate about police complexity, policing qualitative aspects and policing ambivalence between plurality and uniformity in Portuguese contexts. Police proximity, in this setting, could never have been a complete model.

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