

**Policing cities under antiterrorism: towards the
sanctuarisation of events in public space?**
Festive events and protests in Brussels

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C'est une apparence caricaturale d'appropriation et de réappropriation de l'espace urbain, que le pouvoir autorise, lorsqu'il permet des cortèges dans les rues, mascarades, bals folkloriques. Quant à la véritable appropriation, celle de la "manif" effective, elle est combattue par les forces répressives, qui commandent le silence et l'oubli.

Henri Lefebvre, 1970, *La Révolution urbaine*

Abstract

This master thesis addresses the evolution of events policing in Brussels public space after the 2015-2016 terrorist attacks on Paris and Brussels. Using a variety of qualitative methods on several events such as music festivals and protests, I analyse the policing strategies and surveillance and security techniques. Implemented by different security institutions, they are deeply rooted in space and this has implications for public space and the right to the city of the society outcasts. What emerges is that security measures at festive events have been reinforced after the attacks, thereby consolidating the permanent state of exception. Protests policing, on the other hand, does not suffer from these specific exception measures. However it is influenced by global tendencies in protests policing, playing a double game of negotiation with the legitimate protesters and repression against the dissenting ones.

In fact, security measures for both types of events are based on edifying temporary fortifications, managing circulations, and the close monitoring of the spaces of the events. In the antiterrorist context, the status of racialised populations as ‘enemy from within’ has been reinforced, consolidating their ‘membership’ to a long list of outcasts, undesirable populations whose right to the city suffers from the intensification of events policing and surveillance. In order to describe these processes comprehensively, I use the term ‘sanctuarisation’ of events in public space. If sanctuarisation aims to shelter events from terrorist threats and ensure a pleasant and peaceful urban experience, it also protects such events, the neo-liberal economy and the State politics from any kind of disorder and dissent, thereby excluding a series of populations and reinforcing dynamics of domination.

Keywords: festive events, protests, antiterrorism, public space, police, Brussels, sanctuarisation, state of exception, negotiated management, prevention, repression

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Preliminary note and abbreviations

Notes on inclusive language

I have decided to write this thesis along common patterns of inclusive language:

- other genders than male are included, notably by using the neutral pronoun *they* and its derived forms in order to designate one person whose gender is neutral, non-binary or unknown to me;
- non-white people are designated by the terms *racialised people*, as a way to acknowledge that they suffer from racial oppression because of their ethnicity or skin colour, and understanding *race* as a social construct.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used both in the text body, figures and references:

BCR	Brussels Capital Region
BME	Brussels Major Events (association controlled by Brussels city)
BPS	Brussels Prevention and Security – the regional organisation for coordinating prevention and security policies in the BCR
Brussels-West PZ	Police Zone Molenbeek-Koekelberg-Berchem-Ganshoren-Jette
BSF	Brussels Summer Festival
CGSLB	The Belgian liberal union (FR ¹ : Centrale Générale des Syndicats Libéraux de Belgique; VL: ACLVB)
CIK	Federal police support intervention troops
CoAMU	BCR Coordination for emergency medical aid
CSC	The Belgian Christian union (FR: Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens; VL: ACV)
CUTA	Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (FR: OCAM; VL: OCAD)
DAS	Federal police specialised support direction for public security, notably providing special material for riot control.
De Lijn	Flemish public transport agency
EU	European Union
FEB	Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FR: Fédération des Entreprises Belges)
FGTB	The Belgian socialist union (FR: Fédération Générale des Travailleurs de Belgique; VL: ABVV)

1 FR: French translation, VL: Flemish translation.

INT	Brussels police zone intervention troops
JUD	Brussels police general intelligence officers
HyCap	“Hypothecated capacity” of a police zone: troops available as support for other zones
MB	Moniteur Belge: the publishing organism for law document
Marlow PZ	Police Zone Uccle-Auderghem-Watermael-Boitsfort
Midi PZ	Police Zone Forest-Anderlecht-St Gilles
Montgomery PZ	Police Zone Etterbeek-Woluwé St Pierre/St Lambert
MR	Mouvement Réformateur: Belgian French-speaking liberal party
NATO	North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NMPS	Negotiated Management of Public Space (FR: GNEP, <i>gestion négociée de l'espace public</i>)
PlanU	Emergency planning deputy officer of the mayor (Brussels city)
PolBru	Police Zone Brussels-Capital-Ixelles (PZ 5339)
(Pol)BruNo	Police Zone St-Josse/Schaerbeek/Evere
PS	Parti Socialiste: Belgian French-speaking socialist party
PZ	Police Zone
SIAMU	BCR firefighters
SNCB	Belgian railway agency (VL: NMBS)
SPC	Federal police department in charge of railways and metro
SPF	Service Public Fédéral (Federal Public Office)
STIB	Brussels public transport agency (VL: MIVB)
TEC	Walloon public transport agency
TRA-T	Brussels police zone traffic and roadworks department
Visit.brussels	Brussels regional tourist office

FIRST PART

1. Introduction

During the direct aftermath of the Paris attacks in November 2015, the French State went under the state of emergency and the Belgian State rose the “alert level” to 4². These two dispositions of state of exception include, amongst others, the increase of the level of armed forces presence in public space. Similarly to the succession of events in the United States of America in 2001 where the Patriot Act was passed not long after the 9-11 attacks, strong measures allegedly aiming to protect the population by mitigating the risks of attacks and increasing surveillance were passed (some of them temporarily) (Gillham et al. 2013; Wood 2015; Coaffee 2017). These measures have an impact on the policing of public space, now a target of terrorist attacks, against which it has to be secured (Coaffee 2017). This influences the presence intensity, the behaviour and the techniques of the police in public space, for example when ensuring the protection of an event, or when supervising or repressing a protest. Additionally, the police bears intrinsic and ubiquitous characteristics, such as the discretionary power of its agents and their monopoly of force use (Fassin 2014; De Maillard et al. 2018). Authors such as Wood and Rigouste (2015) have shown that the evolution of its techniques can evolve internationally in a synchronised way. Thus, this policing can have powerful unwanted or concealed effects on the right to the city (Lefebvre 1968).

1.1. Research questions

Addressing these issues, I will attempt to answer the following question:

How does post-2015 antiterrorism impact the policing of mass events in public space in Brussels?

Immediately another question follows the first one: *how are mass events in public space in Brussels policed?* As this has not been addressed recently in the literature, and because such policing evolves regularly, this question will also be answered here.

1.2. Definition of the terms

Here “*post-2015 antiterrorism*”³ should be understood as the antiterrorist laws and measures that were taken following the Paris attacks on the 13 November 2015 in Belgium. These attacks had a strong impact on Belgium and its “security culture” (Campion 2018): a “lockdown” was imposed by the authorities on Brussels and longer term measures were enforced (see section 3). Thus, antiter-

2 For a chronology of the evolution of the alert level, see p.Erreur : source de la référence non trouvée.

3 There is a difference between “counterterrorism” and “antiterrorism”. The former refers to offensive strategies and “operations taken to neutralize terrorists and their organizations” while the latter refers to “defensive measures used to reduce the vulnerability of individuals and property to terrorist acts” (Joint Chiefs of Staff Washington United States 2017). This work does not interest in the offensive fight against terrorism and mostly focuses on preventive measures around events, thus on antiterrorist measures.

rorism includes the measures taken and enforced under the Belgian alert level 4, the measures that were written in the common law in the following years, and the measures that remained enforced despite the stop of the state of exception. However it has to remain clear that there is no one-way linear relationship between the legislative or executive work and the on-field policing: they influence each other as Neocleous (2007a; 2008) and Wood (2015) have shown it (see section 2.4). In addition to being limited in time (2015-2018) my questions will also be limited geographically as my empirical cases will be selected in Brussels.

The “*policing of mass events*” perhaps requires clarification as well. Here I use ‘mass events’ in opposition to ‘mega-events’, such as Olympic Games or protests against international political summits, on which the existing literature has already focused a lot (see section 2.3.2). Thus the idea here is to address the policing of perhaps more ‘ordinary’ events, which audience can vary (from the neighbourhood market to the music festival or the Gay Pride). Still, I will notably focus on events gathering more than 1,000 people, which is why I use ‘mass events’. They include notably both protests and festive events. Here, ‘festive events’ include equally cultural, sportive, and any other festive or entertaining event happening in public space, as opposed to gatherings and demonstrations that aim to defend a political message or express more radical dissent. The aim of these types of events is to gather a particular (massive) audience, for protest, cultural, communicative and/or commercial objectives.

Such events seem to be the target of risk (notably of terrorist attack) mitigation and target hardening strategies by policing them more intensively. Put simply, policing describes the action of the police or any other forces of law and order on a space (e.g. perimeter fencing, road blocking etc.) or on people (e.g. watching, filtering etc.), making sure that law and order are respected. Thus, I am interested in how massive gatherings are policed, especially protests and festive events, and if and how this policing has evolved with antiterrorist measures. In these cases, public space policing will take very specific shapes, that impacts both the “representations of space” (governmentally regulated public space) and “representational spaces” (“public space [...] used by social groups”) (Lefebvre 1991; Springer 2016, p. 108). Springer argues that, in a policed public space, the former dominate the latter (p. 115), taking out feelings and claims and replacing them by security and entertainment, potentially towards the “end of public space” (Sorkin 1992). Is it the case in Brussels, and where and how does it translate in spatial, urban forms? Public space policing that involves protecting, securing places where festive events take place also involves repressing unauthorised and/or dissenting protests. It may well participate in intertwined mechanisms of privatisation, disneyfication, securitisation, ... of public spaces (see for example Fussey et al. 2012). The purpose of this research would be to illustrate and explain those mechanisms, and to contribute to the crucial exposing of dynamics of neoliberalisation.

A last word on the research question: the initial question and ambition was larger and was using three comparative perspectives. First, the diachronic one: before and after 2015 attacks and consequent measures. Second, the typological one: it is possible to sort mass events into festive ones (such as festivals, but also sportive and cultural events) and protests or insurrectional ones (e.g. unions protests). Those typologies gather a wide and much more varied sample of events (e.g. a differentiation in the degree of insurrection in a protest), including what could be called festive protests (such as the *Belgian Pride*). I have conserved these two prisms for the present research. Eventually, a third one was dropped in an early research stage: the geographical one. It would have been interesting to compare the answer to the research question in Paris and in Brussels, notably because they have been affected at the same time by terrorist attacks. They also have different political and policing systems and a different relationship to policing, especially when considering the interactions of the police with the young racialised men of the Parisian suburbs and with protesters during demonstrations (Campion 2019). Yet such contextual differences could have made this comparison less pertinent. Moreover, during the research and the writing of this thesis, the news were quite rich in so-called ‘policing abuses’, both in Belgium and France (also in Germany, Turkey, the USA etc.), and this has surely influenced my choice of topic. It has continued, revived or created a vast debate on policing issues, that this thesis could contribute to, both in bringing new material, notions and perspectives.

1.3. *Plan*

This work will be structured as follows. First, I sketch a literature review on the topics of antiterrorism, public space, festive events and protests policing. It is followed by a brief contextualisation of the recent terrorist events in Brussels and Paris and a review of the legal framework. Then, I describe my hypothesis of a sanctuarisation of events in public space. To conclude the first part of this work, I expose the methodologies I use in order to answer the research questions.

The second part is dedicated to the description and analysis of the case-studies chosen. I start by a focus on festive events and their evolution under antiterrorism. The same scheme is then applied to protests. Eventually, I discuss the general trends and I compare the policing and sanctuarisation of festive events on one hand and protests on the other hand. Before the conclusion, I propose an assessment of the sanctuarisation hypothesis.

2. State of the art

In the following literature review, I first address the concept of security and its transformation with antiterrorism policies. Second, I shortly expose debates on the meaning of public space and right to the city, and the pressures and fragmentation the former endures. Finally, I look at the analyses of the policing of festive events and protests, particularly well-developed in the case of ‘mega-events’.

2.1. *Antiterrorism: the state of exception as a neoliberal authoritarian tool*

2.1.1. *Security of the liberal State*

Security received much attention from critical theorists and researchers. According to Karl Marx (1975 [1846]), security is the “supreme concept of bourgeois society: it’s a concept that legitimises any action by the State whatsoever, so long as the action is conducted in the name of security” (Neocleous 2007b, p. 146). Thus, security is a fundamental component of the (neo)liberal State and it is notably appealed to during times of crisis – such as terror attacks – which justifies the need of a “critique of security” as political historian Mark Neocleous argues (2000; 2008):

“The lesson of the twentieth century is that the crises of liberalism, more often than not expressed as crises threatening the security of the state and the social order of capital, reveal the potential for the rehabilitation of fascism. [...] The aim [of the critique of security] is to play a part in freeing the political imagination from the paralysis experienced in the face of security. [...] It is often said that security is the gift of the state; perhaps we ought to return the gift” (Neocleous 2008, pp. 9–10).

Deconstructing security is indeed crucial, because it is both a product and a production force of socio-spatial processes (Glück, Low 2017). It shapes public space and the interactions and activities that occur there (see below), both by mobilising security and surveillance assemblages (Haggerty, Ericson 2000; Lippert 2009) and a variety of institutions and staff. Notably, Ian Loader (2000) has highlighted the diversity of policing institutions (from public to private) and actors.

Security can be criticised by understanding and analysing its close relationship with the construction of (the) State(s), the development of capitalism, and the relentless enforcement of their domination. Hence, geographer Stephen Graham (2010) and sociologist Mathieu Rigouste (2012; 2015) have pointed out the industrialisation of security and policing and the constitution of a “global [security and] violence market”. Strongly based on (neo-)colonial experiments, such rationalised policing is then taken back ‘home’ and applied on the “colonised of the interior” (Rigouste 2012). This is described by Michel Foucault as “boomerang effects” (1997 [1976]). Reproducing tactics of maintaining order and militarising them only develops further more this global violence market.

2.1.2. *Antiterrorism and the state of exception*

According to the sociologist Ulrich Beck (2002), terrorism (along with the financial and environmental crisis) contributes to transform this world into a “World Risk Society”, potentially inducing fear – at least for the privileged which did not face risk before⁴. Modernization and neoliberalism have fostered and generalised a global strategy of pro-active risk anticipation, mitigation and prevention, a whole logic of risk management, that encompasses antiterrorism strategies. Indeed, States are driven to avert speculative scenarios of potential terrorist attacks rather than to reach a specific goal. In order to do so, they must implement “radical measures [...] to protect the individual and the nation” (Wolfendale 2007, p. 88), which is a dubious rhetoric: the terrorist threat is “far less than the threat posed by many other events and is not sufficient to justify the radical curtailment of civil liberties” (*ibid.*). In fact, such newness of endangerment of the “balance” between “security” and “liberty” is a seducing theory, but Neocleous (2007b) shows that the research for this “balance” has always only been a “myth”. According to him, “security is the *supreme concept of liberal ideology*” (p. 142), making liberty its “original myth” (p. 145) because liberty always finishes being traded off against security. Hence, this pushes liberal States “further towards entrenched authoritarian measures” (p. 144), especially when resorting to the state of emergency.

The state of emergency, or the state of exception gives the sovereign “prerogative” and “arbitrary” powers (Locke 1997; quoted by Neocleous 2007b). These powers of *emergency* have emerged from the “liberalization of martial law” (Neocleous 2007a). As a “permanent technology of government” (Agamben 2014), the state of exception has a rhetoric of its own, expressing “neutrality and necessity”, even though it soon becomes persistent (Agamben 2005), as Neocleous writes:

“Whatever example we use, the pattern is the same: an ‘emergency’ occurs in which ‘security’ is threatened; existing emergency powers are exercised and new ones put in place; these are then gradually ‘stretched’ beyond their original scope; this stretching is gradually justified and legitimised, until the police and security forces are exercising the powers way beyond their original context, to the extent that are become part of the everyday functioning of the rule of law: the emergency becomes permanent, the exceptional becomes the rule” (2007b, p. 144).

2.2. Pressures on public space and the right to the city

2.2.1. *Behind the ideals, the public space of domination and exclusion*

Literature on public space is very abundant (see for example Decroly et al. 2003; Akkar Ercan 2007), both amongst geographers, planners and designers, not to mention a growing attention of sociologists, especially since it has been uncritically elevated as the “virtuous space of citizenship” (Lévy,

4 It is important to note that we are not equal towards risk taken more generally (poverty, illness, death, ...): the working class [and populations facing other oppressions] face several realistic risks since they were born, provoked by capitalist exploitation [and discriminations], while the elite [and the privileged], although they might face a “new” risk, have little to lose since they only need to manage the new potentiality of that risk and will not be in the front line anyway (Garnier 2008, p. 73).

Lussault 2003, p. 338). According to these geographers, public space is “characterised by its public status” and can be “differentiated from *common* space, i.e. all the potential places of the people’s social practices” (p. 338, my emphasis and translation). Indeed, the fundamental difference between private and public space is the “admission criteria”: in a public space, “the right to enforce those criteria is always in question”, imparting it a political dimension (Hénaff, Strong 2001).

This makes public space the political space *par excellence*, the materialisation of Habermas’ (1999) public sphere; or the place of the social transaction for Gibout (2009), i.e. that of a concerted decision between citizens. These views are similar to those elaborated since the 1990s in urban theories by urban designers, politicians and philosophers: they plead for a ‘renewal’ of certain neighbourhoods through the ‘re-appropriation’ of public space by the citizens. The latter must be able to meet, move and debate along civic norms, in a reproduction of the “spatial mythology” of the Greek agora (Lévy, Lussault 2003; Delgado 2016; Springer 2016).

In fact, one can mobilise geographer and sociologist Henri Lefebvre’s analyses in the *Production of Space* (1991), where he defines “representations of space” and “representational spaces”. Representations of space designate the “conceptualized space” (*ibid.*, p. 33), that of the technicians which plan and shape the city. They “are tied to the relations of production and to the ‘order’ which those relations impose” (*ibid.*, p. 38) and can also include this ‘ideal’ of public space. “Representational spaces embod[y] complex symbolisms [...] linked to the clandestine [...] social life” (*ibid.*, p. 33). This is the space “directly lived through its associated images and symbols, [...] the space of its ‘inhabitants and ‘users’ ” (*ibid.*, p. 39)⁵. The former are the dominant space, and they dominate representational spaces (Lefebvre 1991; Springer 2016), through mechanisms explained below.

Indeed, professionals of space production, members of the society elite, have made public space their “instrument of urban politics” in the entrepreneurial city (Decroly et al. 2003). They attempt to produce public space along their *ideal of an ordered and pacified public space charged with the citizenship morality*, i.e. where debates must respect civic norms. Thus public space conceals the exploitation relationships, helped by the citizenship ideology that figures “citizens” as equal individuals or users that have equal access and use of public space (Delgado 2016, p. 31), which is far from true: public space is definitely a space of exclusion and oppression, particularly to women, racialised, queer, precarious and homeless people... (in short anyone deflecting from universalised “normative subjectivities” (Springer 2016, p. 113)), because it is designed by the dominant and in their interest (Davis 1992; Belina 2003; Garnier 2008).

5 To this discussion, Lefebvre associates one about symbols and signs : representations of space induce a system of obvious, “verbal signs”, while representational spaces induce a system of more subtle, “non-verbal [...] signs” (1991, p. 39).

Protests, intrinsic to a “democratic” public space, allowing the debate on access issues, territoriality and symbolic power, are carefully policed, and undesirable crowds are excluded from public space. Such exclusion from the “space of appearances” (Arendt 1958) also keeps them out of the democratic debate, as geographer Simon Springer (2016, p. 111) puts it: “the exclusion of some groups from democratic processes via their failures to attain recognition in public spaces underlines the critical importance of materiality” (see next section).

This issue can also be raised using another concept of Henri Lefebvre: the right to the city (1968), or the right to be included in making the urban – which is, through these dominant and exclusive dynamics, denied to marginalised people. Still, the right to the city is claimed by different, conflicting, interests and the dominant ones are hegemonic in this debate. Accompanied by that of “re-appropriation public space”, this notion is frequently mobilised in order to justify “urban renewal” processes which in fact contribute to gentrification (Margier, Melgaço 2016; Van Criekingen 2018). It is thus necessary to understand the right to the city in an emancipating and equality perspective: first for those that are presently repressed: the poor, racialised people, women and queer people, disabled people etc. (Margier, Melgaço 2016).

2.2.2. Public space under pressure

The right to the city is endangered through several other types of neoliberal and securitarian ‘attacks on public space’. It would be beyond the scope of this work to review them all: abundant literature can be found on these matters, mobilising a wide diversity of sometimes overlapping concepts. Thus, I mostly concentrate here on privatisation and securitisation. The works reviewed here are mostly written by geographers and sociologists and mainly focus on Europe and the USA.

Processes of *privatisation* can be traced back to the 18th century, but they are now multiplying and taking different shapes. They mostly designate the transformation of public spaces into private or semi-public spaces, entailing ambiguous forms such as “secured private spaces appearing to be public” (gated communities) and “private spaces open to public” (commercial centres), designed for the “eviction of undesirables from urban spaces” (Decroly et al. 2003). In European cities, privatisation is structured in three different ways: first, the status of the public space itself can be modified into private space; second, only the access (and usage) conditions to such space are modified; finally “new forms of regulation” of space can be imposed (Dessouroux 2003). Outside Europe, this process is intensely enforced, notably in North and South-America (Davis 1992; Tulumello 2017). For example in Los Angeles, privatising open-air plazas enables the enforcement of new regulations and exclusionary measures (Loukaitou-Sideris 1993), while the elite can also profit from other “pseudo-public spaces” (indoor commercial malls, cultural spaces and office centres) (Davis 1992).

According to Davis (1992), Low (2017) and Tulumello (2017), privatisation could be an answer to strong feelings of fear, particularly fear of risk (of crime or of downward social mobility) and fear of the “other”. These fears might have increased after the September 11, 2001 attacks (Low 2017), and it is certainly similar in the Brussels context, after 2015 and 2016 attacks. As mentioned earlier, the figure of the “other” is constructed as the ones deflecting from the norm. Excluding (preventively) this too visible “otherness”, post-public spaces and enclosures provide “a socially homogeneous space” to those who shelter there (Tulumello 2017, p. 59), leading to an “increasing social segregation through spatial separation” (Low 2017, p. 378). Moreover, this phenomenon is self-reinforcing, as barriers actually increase the fear of those that are inside of them (and possibly also that of those that remain outside). Sometimes, material barriers are not yet necessary to address these fears: in Brussels, Dessouroux et al. (2009) argue that policies of “rehabilitation of public spaces” in central working-class neighbourhoods aimed at embellishing them are accompanied by installation of control devices. In this progressively “panoptic city” (De Keersmaecker, Debailleul 2014), the ‘other’ (in this case inhabitants of working-class neighbourhoods) is more and more watched to reassure middle-class populations that municipalities would like to see settle in those neighbourhoods. Synthesizing the discussion, it is possible to relate privatisation to three of Tulumello’s (2017) “fearscapes”: *enclosures* (such as gated communities), *post-public spaces*, and spatialised *control* – rarely absent of the previous element as a “visible but unverifiable power”.

Hence, it is hard to separate privatisation from *securitisation* of public space, understood here as all protection measures (physical or not) applied to said space. Describing a global tendency, Graham (2010) has also underlined the “new military urbanism”, i.e. the increasing militarisation and securitisation of cities, which now concentrate the attention of warfare: they are the new battlefields.

Foucault (2008 [1975]) has analysed how security, discipline and surveillance were enforced by acting upon architecture in a number of institutions (e.g. prison, school). In further lectures (Foucault 1997 [1976]; 2007 [1978]), he has highlighted the critical rooting of security in urban space. Notably, he describes how “discipline apparatuses” use mediating means to normalise and individualise multiplicities in order to manage them more easily (Foucault 2007 [1978]; Klauser 2013a). They rely on space, by producing enclosures and separations. On the other hand, “security apparatuses” focus on the regulation of practices, by letting them happening under careful technical monitoring. “The limit of the acceptable is not merely conditioned by a binary opposition gradually to a given reality, in function of careful calculations and through complex procedures” (Klauser 2013a, p. 99). This is notably applied on the management of circulations:

“The problem is not only that of fixing and demarcating the territory, but of allowing circulations to take place, of controlling them, shifting the good and the bad, ensuring that things are always in

movement, constantly moving around, continually going from one point to another, but in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are cancelled out” (Foucault 2007 [1978], p. 65).

These two apparatuses overlap and are materialised in space, leading researchers to depict them in a number of metaphorical ways. They induce the emergence of “splintering urbanism” (Graham, Marvin 2002) or that of a “carceral archipelago”, relying on enclosures and fortifications and constituted of privatised areas such as gated communities, commercial centres and mega-events perimeters (Soja 2000; Coaffee 2015). For example, the city of Los Angeles becomes a “fortress city” (Davis 1992), a fragmented urban space under control and surveillance. In Brussels central business districts like the European neighbourhood are under heavy surveillance and designed for this purpose (Laurens et al. 2012). This was reinforced in light of antiterrorism (Coaffee 2017) and measures in the name of increasing the safety in public space have direct consequences on the latter, such as restrictions on its use and increase of feelings of insecurity.

Other attacks on public space notably include the commodification of public space (the taking-over of capitalism on the naming, use and transformation of public space (Zukin 1988)) and its disneyfication (creating a commodified, ordered public space exclusively dedicated to leisure, emptied of all its other meanings, and secured for that sake). “Corporate or State planners attempt to create spaces based on a desire for *security* more than interaction and for *entertainment* more than democratic politics” (Springer 2016, p. 115; after Goss 1996).

2.3. Festive events policing

Following the May 1968 French protests, Lefebvre wrote in his book *Urban Revolution* (2003, p. 21):

“The parades, masquerades, balls, and folklore festivals authorised by a power structure caricaturise the appropriation and re-appropriation of space. The true appropriation characteristic of effective “demonstrations” is challenged by the forces of repression, which demand silence and forgetfulness.”

In the following sections, I present the literature on why and how festive events and protests temporarily occupy public spaces, notably how their security is ensured.

2.3.1. *Urban entrepreneurialism & events urbanism*

Festive events, e.g. urban festivals, have a local to international audience and are quite popular, especially among middle class (and one could say among Florida’s contested “creative class” – for that matter the appraisal of such events in his works might have impacted their diffusion (see Peck 2005)). They are entirely part of the “entrepreneurial city” strategy and contribute to place the city in the “inter-urban competition” (Harvey 1989). In fact, urban policies are now largely determined by the need to be well-positioned in such competition and thus attempt to attract tourists (and investors) as a way to make the urban economy a prosperous one. Additionally, the “orchestrated

production of an urban image can [...] help create a sense of [...] civic pride and loyalty to place” (*ibid.*, p. 14). However Harvey argues that “urban entrepreneurialism consequently contributes to increasing disparities in wealth and income” (*ibid.*, p. 12).

Inherent to urban entrepreneurialism, the events urbanism (“*urbanisme événementiel*”), has recently started being researched, notably with contributions from sociology and tourism sciences. Such urbanism has replaced urban monumental interventions (e.g. Mitterrand’s works in Paris) in the urban marketing strategy and has been diffused around the world since then. Hence, public investments are no more exclusively funding concrete works (although projects of urban renovation are still abundant) but also concern temporary ludic installations (for a night, a few days, or a whole summer) – not without impacting usual activities (Monnet 2012). Geographer Luc Gwiazdzinski (2009) has attempted to constitute a typology of those festive events, using criteria such as their duration, the period (in the year/day or night) in which they take place, their audience, their nature, etc. and stressing that they always have an economic outcome at some point. According to him, they also foster new uses of public space for leisure activities. Working on Montreal, Paris and Brussels, sociologist Benjamin Pradel (2017) highlighted the “authentic, animated and secure experience” (p. 5) that has to be ensured, through a whole set of regulations and insurances, thus temporarily privatising public space and moving away potential troublemakers. Additionally, public space management measures are enforced for an event to happen successfully: traffic diverting, specific infrastructures, multi-actors surveillance (including private security). “This official ubiquitous presence reveals to everyone that the party is planned, the subversion limited, and the gathering carefully controlled” (*ibid.*, p. 11, my translation). Yet both Gwiazdzinski and Pradel (after Harvey, p. 14) explain that the event can “reinvent an ‘us’ ” (Gwiazdzinski 2009, p. 351), (re-)creating bonds between inhabitants of a city. This view radically contrasts that of sociologist Jean-Pierre Garnier (2008, pp. 69–70) who considers interactions between the events’ participants (“forming an atomized ‘solitary crowd’ because of individualism and consumerism”) to be much more indifferent, or even hostile to one another. In short, the extent to which a festive event – organised under urban entrepreneurialism and purely for economic goals – is beneficial for urban communities’ cohesion, or if this is only an injunction of the same neoliberal ideology, is much debated. Nevertheless, there seems to be more agreement over more easily observable phenomena such as the public space management measures and their exclusionary character.

2.3.2. *Mega-events security*

This is also shown by scholars who have worked on mega-events, such as the Olympic Games or other international sport competitions. Geographer Francisco Klauser (2013b) applies Foucault’s discipline and security apparatuses (Foucault 2007) to the description of festive events policing. Such policing

encloses the space of the event, thereby fixing space – in this, it matches the discipline apparatus description. It is also a security apparatus because the event security manages flows of people, sorting out the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’, controlling the circulations “in such a way that the inherent dangers of this circulation are cancelled out” (Klauser 2013b, p. 101). Other authors seem to agree, while also using other formulations. Urban geographer John Coaffee (2015) points out a “normalisation” of carceral geographies in cities that host Olympic Games. Moreover, external and internal dangers are no longer differentiated in the securitisation process (for example, facing terrorist threats; Bigo 2001; Fussey 2015), thus reinforcing external borders (e.g. national borders) as well as installing intra-urban “micro-scale borders”, i.e. checkpoints at the entrance of an event (Franzén 2001). These fortifications, access control, circulations management contribute to a general trend mentioned earlier, i.e. an increase in securitisation and militarisation of urban public space (Graham 2010).

It is arguable that mega-events security and surveillance techniques can be found as well on smaller events, such as mass events.

2.4. The evolution of protests policing tactics

Protests policing, or public order policing, has notably caught the attention of criminologists (such as Luis Fernandez (2008) and Chad Whelan and Adam Molnar (2017a)) and sociologists (such as Patrick Gillham and colleagues (2013) and Lesley Wood (2015)). They highlight a global evolution of public order policing from hard tactics, “the traditional ‘escalated force’ model” (Whelan, Molnar 2017) to negotiated management and liaison policing, where protesters and police cooperation is strongly promoted. Under this model, the two parties attempt to find an agreement on the terms of a demonstration, enabling the police to be more tolerant to these disruptions of public order and thus to use a lot less repression techniques (Fernandez 2008; Wood 2015; Whelan, Molnar 2017). This evolution has particularly been fostered by the impact of the perception of repression outside the policing world: under this model, the police negotiates and communicates with groups that it does not perceive as dangerous, reducing the cost of protests for both the police and the activists (but possibly also their impact) (Wood 2015).

Since the 1990s however, a new model has emerged: the strategic incapacitation. Under this rationale, police choose the techniques they use for each demonstration in a wide range of tactics, notably according to local or contextual characteristics. In addition to choosing between soft and hard tactics, the police can also recourse to “para-military techniques such as less-lethal weapons, pre-emptive arrest and broad spatial containment strategies” (Gillham et al. 2013, summarised by Whelan, Molnar 2017, p. 2). Concerning the latter, Wood (2015) has pointed out that the “sanctuarisation of [political] summits”, i.e. their enclosure and forbidding access to them for protesters was now a common practice in protest policing. The emergence of this new model of strategic incapa-

citation was particularly caused by the emergence, in parallel, of new protest practices and new forms of groups, including movements such ‘Occupy Wall Street’ where activists groups seem more disorganised, more diverse, without a leader, and thus less controllable and predictable by the police (*ibid.*; Fernandez 2008; de Lint and Hall 2009; Wood 2015). Police tactics are thus highly adaptable according to individual cases, notably by basing such decisions on risk analyses (de Lint and Hall 2009).

Beyond these global tendencies, the local context still plays an important role: “localised interactions between police and protestors create a history of accumulated experiences that inform how they identify and (re)act towards one another” (Whelan and Molnar 2017, p. 2, after Gorringer, Rosie 2008). In fact, these interactions depend as much on the protestors than on the police. Wood (2015) argues that police units, as collective actors, are socially constructed. In fact, police institutional and informal culture mobilise values such as a sense of mission, courage, resistance, respect of the hierarchy chain, but also pragmatism, conservatism and machismo (Reiner 1992; Carrabine et al. 2009; Wood 2015). Wood (2015) further argues that such institutional norms are ‘internalised’ by the police officers, constituting their habitus (Bourdieu 1980) and influencing their work.

“A police officer’s habitus constrains their interpretations and assessments of new interactions, while new information constrains police knowledge and, by extension, their logic, justifications, strategy and practices. When police officers try to establish, explain and justify their strategy and tactics, it is necessary to question what they are really defending. Often, legitimacy, influence and autonomy become the real issues in these debates” (Wood 2015, p. 30, my translation⁶).

Terrorism, notably 9/11, has also fostered evolutions towards strategic incapacitation (Gillham et al. 2013; Wood 2015). According to Heidi Boghosian, in a report of the USA National Lawyers Guild (2007), these attacks have reinforced police legitimacy and the population’s fear, which in turn emboldened the police in limiting and managing public demonstrations. In fact, the police developed activists surveillance and house searches and arrests were conducted against activists on the basis of accusations of terrorism. Similarly, after the 2015 attacks in France, the state of emergency enabled the police to issue house arrests and to conduct house searches against several activists (Codaccioni 2019). More generally, the French state of emergency fostered the increase of “preventive repression”, i.e. pro-active tactics in order to repress protests before they even start. This strategy exposes “the will to use antiterrorist apparatuses or its prevention logic in order to annihilate political dissent” (*ibid.*, p. 41, my translation).

6 Unfortunately, I only dispose of the French translation of Wood’s work, forcing me to translate back direct quotations.

3. Contextualisation

In order to contextualise this work, two elements need to be addressed. First, setting the chronological framework in which Belgian antiterrorist policies are embedded. Second, giving an insight into the legal framework, i.e. briefly listing the legislation around events and protests policing in effect and/or under change in 2014 and 2018.

3.1. Chronology

Despite the fact that antiterrorist policies have been enforced recently in Europe since 9/11, statistics actually show a decrease in the number of terrorist attacks since at least thirty years (Krahmann 2011, p. 358). Moreover, European cities are less exposed to such attacks (both in numbers of attacks and in numbers of deaths) than other cities in the world, especially in the (semi-)periphery of the world system (see Figure 1). Nevertheless, media coverage of terrorism and fear in general is quite high in European countries, and recent antiterrorist measures seem to be worth inquiring (following for example Coaffee 2017).

Table 1 details the chronology of major terrorist attacks in France and Belgium since 2014 and relevant for the topic of this work. It traces back the evolution of the “alert level” in Belgium (in shades of orange and red in the table), on which I focus in detail hereafter. This alert level is set by the Coordinating Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA), under the authority of the Interior and Justice ministers, based on the terrorist threat analysis that they conduct⁷. Both CUTA and the alert levels have been defined in 2006. The alert levels range from 1 (“improbable”) to 4 (“serious and imminent threat” – see Table 1 for the other definitions) and can be applied to people, precise places, cities or the entire country. For example, after the Brussels Jewish Museum attack (24/05/2014), the alert level was set to 4 for Jewish institutions, religious buildings, schools etc. while the general level in Belgium remained 2 (Joris 2019). The alert level for Belgium was risen to 3 in January 2015, directly following Paris attacks and the “dismantlement of a terrorist unit” in the Belgian city of Verviers: with this counterterrorist operation, the police found out that attacks were planned in the same month (La Dernière Heure 2015a). In addition the “Operation Vigilant Guardian” was launched by the federal government in the same period. Under this operation, soldiers were deployed in several cities, patrolling in the streets and watching several critical places. It is still operational today (July 2019),

7 Besides CUTA (OCAM in French), several other bodies are charged of antiterrorist and counterterrorist matters, among which the following two. The National Security Council, created in 2015 and constituted by several ministers, defines the general policy for security and intelligence (Centre de crise 2013a). On the other hand the crisis centre (created in 1986, after several catastrophes in Belgium) is a “duty civil service” charged of managing interior security, emergency planning, public order and broadly speaking any emergency situations. For example, if a catastrophe or a terrorist attack would happen during an event, the crisis centre would be in charge of managing this emergency situation and helping other bodies in such management (Centre de crise 2013b).

although the amount troops deployed has changed several times (with 1,800 soldiers as a maximum during the period following 2016 Brussels attacks (Belga 2019a)).

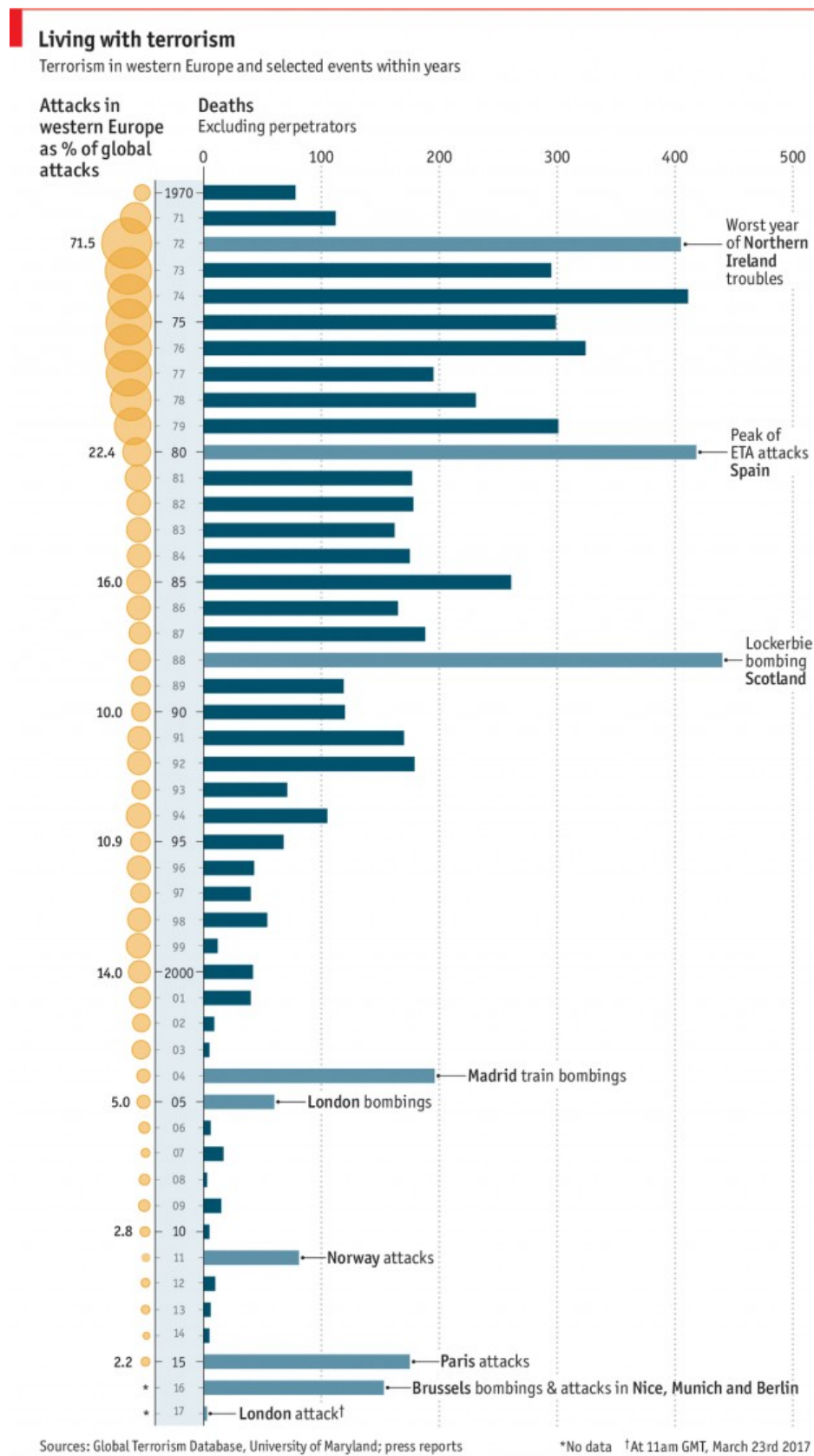


Figure 1: Terrorist attacks in Europe and in the world, 1970-2017 (The Economist 2017).

Date	Alert level	Event
01/01/2014	Level 2	
24/05/2014		Brussels Jewish Museum attack – alert level for Jewish interests risen to 4
08-17/08/2014		Case-study: Brussels Summer Festival 2014
06/11/2014		Case-study: Unions' Joined Protest 2014
	Level 3	
7-9/01/2015		Paris attacks (1): Charlie Hebdo, Hyper Casher
15/01/2015		Verviers anti-terrorism operations Launch of the Operation Vigilant Guardian
	Level 2	
09/03/2015		(alert level change)
13/11/2015	Level 3	Paris attacks (2): Bataclan, Stade de France State of emergency in France
16/11/2015		(alert level change)
21/11/2015		Brussels "lockdown": metro and schools closed, public events cancelled
26/11/2015	Level 4	(alert level change in Brussels)
22/03/2016		Brussels attacks: Zaventem airport, Maelbeek metro station.
23/03/2016	Level 3	Brussels: metro and schools are reopened.
24/03/2016		(alert level change)
14/07/2016	Level 3	Vehicle attack in Nice
01/11/2017	Level 2	End of state of emergency in France
22/01/2018	Level 2	The alert level is taken down to 2 except for "punctual exceptions"
14-18/08/2018		Case-study: Brussels Summer Festival 2018
02/10/2018		Case-study: Unions' Joined Protest 2018
31/12/2018		

	Level 4: "serious and imminent threat"
	Level 3 in Belgium and level 4 in Brussels
	Level 3: "possible and probable threat"
	Level 2: "unlikely threat"

Table 1: Chronology of selected terrorist attacks, events and the alert level in Belgium and France 2014-2018 (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

The alert level 3 was taken down a few months later (except for some institutions), in March (RTBF 2018a). It went back to 3 a week after November 2015 Paris attacks, and even to 4 in Brussels, where one of the suspected terrorists may have stayed in the aftermath of the attacks. Under this level 4 and by decision of the National Security Council, Brussels went under a “lockdown”: many facilities and institutions (e.g. metro, schools, universities, cultural and sports centres...) were closed for several days and public events were cancelled. Several police operations were conducted during this period. The level went down to 3 in Brussels on 26/11/2015 and *Plaisirs d'Hiver* (Brussels Christmas market) was opened a few days later, with reinforced policing measures (7sur7 2015, see section 6.3.1.a). In March 2016, directly after Brussels attacks, the alert level went up again to 4 on all Belgian territory. This only lasted two days: on 24/03/2016, the alert level was down to 3 again and metro and schools were re-opened (La Dernière Heure 2016). Public events were also cancelled that week, but 1 month later, events in public space such as the *Fête du Premier Mai* (organised by FGTB, see section 6.3.1.a) could be organised again. Eventually, the alert level was taken down to 2 for the whole country in January 2018 and this has not changed until the redaction of this thesis (July 2019). Only “punctual exceptions” (C. Michel, quoted by RTBF 2018) are still considered under alert level 3, such as specific institutions.

However, according to Campion (2018), Belgian police historian, even the government underlines that the alert level 2 in 2018 does not encompass the exact same measures as the level 2 in 2014. In 2018, there are still soldiers in the streets, and new legislation has been passed (see next section). In addition, the federal government claims that there is a “new security culture” in the country.

“[The government] now dissociates the alert level from the necessary use of the army to secure some public places. However, the latter had been one of the most visible and communicated consequences during the time sequence in which the alert level had been assessed upwards (levels 3 and 4). [...] There would be a “before” and an “after” 2015-2016 on the scale of the threat and on the role of security actors in the country. [...] In practice, we witness a shift from the exceptional to the permanent: the management of an extraordinary risk thereby becomes the new key to ordinary risk management” (*ibid.*, my translation).

This strongly echoes claims of both Agamben (2005) and Neocleous (2007b) that the state of exception is made permanent. The similar process, though even more evident, is to be found in events that happened in France in parallel. (Other historic examples include the UK and the USA where temporary measures of set of laws (respectively the 1974 Prevention of Terrorism Act and the 2001 Patriot Act) were made permanent at some point in time (*ibid.*, p. 134).) Recently in France, during (and thanks to) the state of emergency itself, activated after the November attacks, hundreds of protests were forbidden, activists were put under home detention and activists’ and Muslim and Arab people’s houses were searched. The state of emergency was extended several times for various

reasons, including securing the Euro football competition and the Nice terrorist attack in summer 2016. Many of the measures of the state of emergency were made permanent with the 30/10/2017 law reinforcing interior security and fight against terrorism passed at the end of the state of emergency (Bastamag 2017; Codaccioni 2019). In Belgium, the state of emergency is not written in Belgian constitution but measures of state of exception have been passed since January 2015 (Paye 2017; see below).

The first research question can thus be formulated in a different way, and another sub-question emerges from this contextualisation:

- how is this “new security culture” (or level 2+) reflected in events policing in public space?
- did events policing in public space change according to the different alert levels?

3.2. Legal framework

This section aims to provide a brief overview of both antiterrorist legislation passed since January 2015 and the legal framework concerning festive events and protests policing (a list is included in annex E). However, a detailed comment of the legislation is not feasible here. Moreover it is never too frequent to point out that policing can evolve without legal change (Wood 2015), which is thus not the single factor to take in account.

Following both January and November 2015 Paris attacks, the Belgian government announced several measures, such as the Operation Vigilant Guardian, passport withdrawal, citizenship deprivation, for terrorists and night-time house searches in certain cases. The latter was legalised in one of the 5 anti- and counterterrorist laws that followed. In addition, those laws comprise other measures that give less preciseness concerning criminal activity and hence extend the appreciation of the judge. In fact, the law uses ambiguous terms such as whether the diffusion of a message by a suspect “creates a risk” of a terrorist attack. Counterterrorist legislation now criminalises intentions rather than acts, just like in France (Paye 2017; Codaccioni 2019).

Events policing is ruled by two legal texts that give instructions on how to apply the Negotiated Management of Public Space (NMPS). In Belgium, this philosophy is in use both for protests and festive events (amongst other categories). Both texts are circulars, i.e. operational texts passed by the minister. The CP4 (MB 2011) has been introduced in 2011 and gives a broad theoretical idea of NMPS. It summarises a reference framework that was already taught in police schools since 2001 but not systematically applied on field (*ibid.*). The OOP41 (MB 2014, p. 41) has been introduced in 2014 and gives more precise operational indications. This suggests that the change observed globally between old practices of maintaining order – assimilated to ‘hard tactics’ – and current practices of

negotiation – ‘soft tactics’ (Whelan, Molnar 2017a a) also occurred in Belgium. Thus *a priori* there seems to be no link between the use of NMPS and the counterterrorist context.

A police officer, Johan Teirlinck (2016), affirms in a conference that this technique has a “democratic objective”: it enables the political power to “tolerate” gatherings in public space (because they are permitted, according to Belgium constitution, although they are subject to the mayor’s authorisation) while nevertheless assuring public order (the mission of the police). Concretely, under NMPS, the organiser of an event (including festive events and protests) must inform the police of the event or gathering they are arranging, in order to plan *together* the measures enforcing public order: the police makes the organiser co-responsible for maintaining public order. This particularly means that the organiser needs to provide for an internal security service and to perform a risk analysis, including informing the police of the route or places in which their event takes place (*ibid.*, p. 8). If the latter includes streets situated in the *neutral zone* (see below), non-governmental organisers will be asked to review the route, or the event will not be authorised and could potentially be repressed (other factors, such as causing disorder, can also foster repression – see section 7.3 for a thorough discussion). The Brussels neutral zone encompasses most of Belgian legislative and executive institutions and places of power⁸ and was designed to prevent any infringement of the exercise of constitutional powers – i.e. these must be able to operate in all circumstances – following violent protests initiated by the POB in the 1880s. The then Brussels mayor Charles Buisson has forbidden protests and other gatherings in this zone since 1890, and thus many protesters (as well as the police) now consider accessing it a mean to defy authority (Keunings 2002).

NMPS is included in the “*intervention philosophy*” named by Teirlinck (2016, p. 16) “Strategic Global Options and Gradual Rules of Engagement” that also implies that police evaluate an event (at several moments) in function of its character (“passive gathering”, “protest gathering”, “violent mob”, or “serious and illegal aggression”). According to the tolerance levels, the visibility of the police will be adapted, to attempt avoiding useless provocations and enforcing de-escalation while still maintaining public order in the city (see Figure 2).

In addition to this general framework for the organisation of events, other texts (especially the 2018 circular SPV 07) rule “private security role during events and festivals” (Jambon 2018). It is directly subordinated to the NMPS and the new law on private security (2017). It rules precisely which activities sworn security agents and – by contradiction – volunteers can exert during a festive event. For example, security agents can control the access to an event’s perimeter while volunteers (or stewards) can only control the validity of the entry ticket. I will dive into more operational details further on (see section 6.1.3).

8 Notably the Federal Parliament, the Senate, the Flemish Parliament, the Prime Minister official office, the Royal Palace, the offices of the Minister-Presidents of BCR and Flanders, etc. and even a bank (Vaesen 2018).

PHILOSOPHIE D'INTERVENTION: Strategic Global Options and Gradual Rules of Engagement

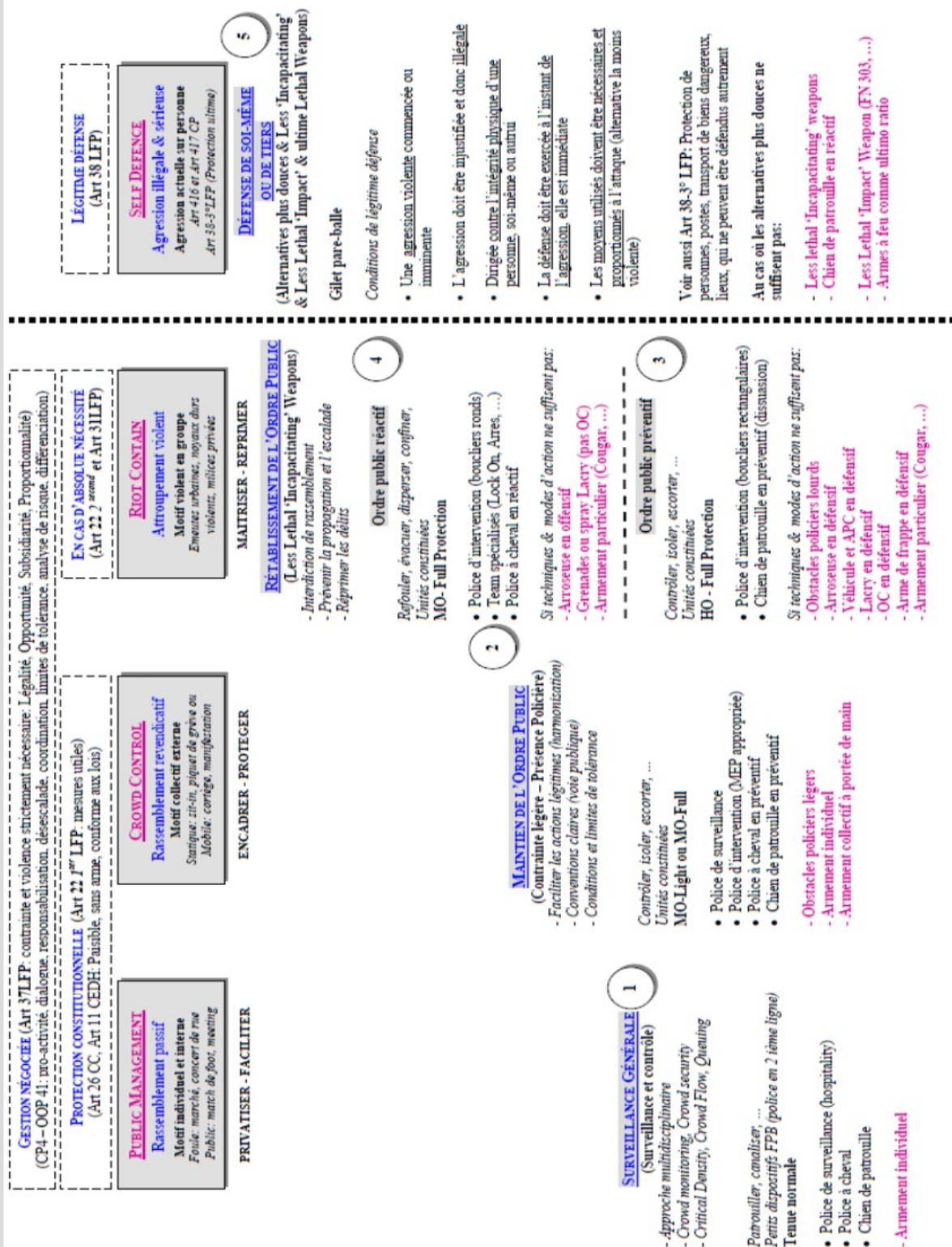


Figure 2: NMPS Intervention philosophy (Teirlinck 2016).

4. Hypothesis: the sanctuarisation of public space

The literature reviewed here has shown that there is already a large literature body on the notion of public space, on the production of space by security – e.g. participating in the privatisation of public spaces – and on dynamics related to antiterrorism and state of exception. However the study of the interrelated impacts of these three axis applied to mass/ordinary events still seems slightly limited. Particularly, descriptions and analyses covering the policing of *both* festive events and protests are missing in the literature. Moreover, illustrations of such particularly recent dynamics in Belgium are lacking, and my work could contribute to meet this need.

Therefore, I formulate the following hypothesis:

Antiterrorism accelerates the neoliberal transformation of States into authoritarian, security, exception-driven regimes. This can be illustrated in entrepreneurial cities by a process of sanctuarisation of public places during mass events, which affects the right to the city.

Sanctuarisation is used by Wood (2015) as the protection of political summits from protesters, using barriers and police forces. Historically, a sanctuary (such as a church) is a shelter, where one can contact “invisible powers” safe from the police that have no right in such place (Vauchez 2000). Capitalism, now in its globalised and neoliberal forms, has induced new forms of sacred, potentially transmitted by media, culture and marketing (see Debord 2018 [1967]; Garnier 2008). Lynch (2012) writes that the sacred is a “communicative structure” (p. 125), and that it can “legitimate acts of violence and [...] form a basis for repressive social order” (p. 136). It is arguable that the new sacred can be found in both consumption culture and security, which are strongly promoted by neoliberalism, and influences the production of space.

“The purpose of public spaces is [...] clearly defined: to serve as a support for staging the concordant vision of a reunited city under the sign of rediscovered urbanity, outside history and society. Thanks to concerted planning [...] everything that can remind us of the divisions, contradictions, conflicts, negativities that made the urban scene an unstable territory of twists and turns, surprises, ambivalences, reversals will be eradicated. On the contrary, it is now important to protect it against any unexpected event” (Garnier 2008, p. 76, my translation).

Building on this, it is possible to propose a definition of sanctuarisation in this context – though it must be clarified that what is done here is a proposal of a tool of understanding of urban policing mechanisms. The *sanctuarisation of a public place during an event* can be defined as the temporary appropriation of such place by political or commercial stakeholders, setting the conditions for its exclusive use. It describes more precisely the process of keeping said public place tidy, disciplined and protected from any disturbances and of restricting access to it. Under this rationale, the use of public space is strictly regulated by the relevant level of political power (municipal, regional...), which sets

strict conditions for events to happen there. They have the exclusive ability of granting or not authorisations to organizations or people to use public space for temporary events (such as festive events and protests). The latter are carefully kept in a well-defined area and painstakingly supervised – the sanctuarised public place. Abstract as well as material rules, terms and obstacles are enforced (Pradel 2017), conditioning the happening of those events. In other words it guarantees the municipal power and the organiser of the event that the public place will be a safe and pacified place, which is the condition for the event to take place and to be a “success” in the context of the neoliberal capitalistic State. Disturbances range from terrorist attacks in a place of massive gathering – which is the pretext for many protection measures that are part of sanctuarisation – to the intervention of undesired protesters for example. Hence, sanctuarisation is closely linked to privatisation, disneyfication and securitisation of public spaces, focusing particularly on the material aspects and on the temporary characteristic of the process.

Therefore a public place that hosts an event is sanctuarised if limits are applied to the event, containing it in time and space. What happens during the event and within its spatial boundaries is strictly defined *a priori* and unapproved behaviours shall be repressed, e.g. fighting, protesting during a festive event, or protesting against the authorised protesters, under various pretexts. The event in itself is thus protected from any interference, enabling it to reach its commercial, communicative or protest goal. Therefore, at that time, the event is considered sacred: this public place temporarily becomes a sanctuary, a sheltered place for the authorised activity, protected from any external threat and disorder. Outside the time and space limits of the event (i.e. before and after the event and out of the authorised perimeter for the event), such activities are not permitted and thus the public space remains largely undisturbed by the event. Containment of the event and of its disturbances in its time and space frame is thus also part of the sanctuarisation rationale. It is critical that the rest of the public space is the least troubled by the event: noise limitations and alternative itineraries are enforced and the space is thoroughly cleaned afterwards.

These mechanisms are enforced for any (mass) event in public space, but with varying intensity depending on the scope, the importance and the popularity of the event. Paradoxically, sanctuarisation of public space can put, for a while, its public character into brackets, because it is appropriated by some users, members of the elite – Sorkin (1992) would say it is the “end of public space”. The events are temporary, but there is possibly a growing enforcement of sanctuarisation, along with an intensification of antiterrorism and state of exception. Public space becomes a sacred and secured⁹ asset, that is to be protected similarly to other private properties, in order to minimise the attack risks, maximise the profits (would it be through a direct commercial operation with a festive event or

9 Both public place and the festive event are secured, just like any other financial asset (Harvey 1989): an event that is protected and secured, which guarantees its visitors’ safety, entails that the risks of catastrophe are low and that the event will be organised again.

through a marketing strategy) and make the investment durable and the image of the city “positive” (see Pradel 2017).

Sanctuarisation intrinsically causes exclusion of the “others”, the undesirables: exclusion of the ones that do not (wish to) comply to the exceptional rules; exclusion of the poor, which cannot access public space that is privatised for a charged commercial event; exclusion of the undesirables, that are denied access to public space under the same circumstances; exclusion of the insurgents, that must file in forms¹⁰ to gain the right to protest or resign to remain silent. Against the legitimizing reason that protecting and thus sanctuarising a public place contributes to ensure its public character – the ideal of an accessible-for-all space described by Lévy and Lussault (2003) – the sanctuarised public space thus actually diverges from that ideal.

Eventually, contemporary sanctuarisation in neoliberal States bears characteristics of privatisation, commodification and militarisation of public space, and could be included in Tulumello’s (2017) “post-public spaces”. Encompassing issues of security and safety, it also emerges from a strategy of risk mitigation in the counterterrorist context. The collateral effect of such process is that the risk mitigation strategy also impacts the right to protest. In fact, as will be exposed later on, this right is difficult to assert in several cases. Concretely, sanctuarisation can be depicted as the temporary restriction of access to specific places in cities, would it be through: fortifications, enclosures, circulations management (Klauser 2013a) and strategic incapacitation (Wood 2015). Accessing a sanctuarised public place requires to be controlled by going through micro scale borders (Franzén 2001): “sanctified spaces amid an otherwise dangerously imagined landscape are heavily reliant on borders” (Fussey et al. 2012).

10 The fact that protests are conditioned to the authorization of the political power against which the protesters are protesting is one of the arguments of some protesters not to file such forms in.

5. Methodology

5.1. Case-studies

5.1.1. *Case selection rationale*

In order to answer the research questions and to assess the hypothesis I made in the previous pages, I have selected the following methodology. Two case-studies were chosen: a festive event (the Brussels Summer Festival) and a protest (organised by the joint union front). The aim of selecting these case-studies was to compare the security measures put in place at those events when they occurred before 2015-2016 (the years of the Paris and Brussels attacks) and after. In the two periods, how public space is policed when an event takes place on it? How and why is it put under protection? What are the impacts of this protection?

These two events have been selected for a detailed study from the wide range of events happening in Brussels – in 2018 nearly 1,000 protests and 3,500 festive events were organised in Brussels city¹¹, beyond other types of events (e.g. cultural or sportive events or official ceremonies). They range from strictly dissenting protests (i.e. “claiming events”¹² as they are called by the police, which are mostly organised in the form of marches) to strictly festive events (most often static). Sometimes both forms (parade and static) are combined. Consequently, the sanctuarisation process might take different forms, depending on the form the events take. Intermediary forms also exist, between the protest and the festive events *stricto sensu*. For example, festive events can have a strong political characteristic (e.g. the “*Belgian Pride*”), and inversely some political protests can be defined as festive (e.g. the *Hart Boven Hard / Tout Autre Chose* parade). However, in the framework of this formal comparison exercise, I have left out this intermediary form of the festive protest and focused on the protest on one side and the festive event on the other.

The two selected events were compared in their 2014 and 2018 versions. Of course, this does not mean that I was able to compare them *ceteris paribus*, i.e. all other things equal, and only adding the antiterrorist context. Such exercise is impossible in social sciences. Other factors such as weather conditions, number of people, political context, changes in the activities, etc. certainly have influenced the events in one way or another. Moreover, changes in their security can have multiple causes and may not even be linked to terrorism. Therefore I have tried to select the most comprehensive methodology, and the results were completed by the analysis of other events. In fact, over the course of my research and particularly when conducting interviews, I was offered several opportunities to

11 Brussels police 2019, document received during an interview with the mayor press officer.

12 “Événements à caractère revendicatif”, in French.

give attention to other events than the ones selected as case-studies (the list can be found in annex D). Although there was a risk to get lost in too much data, I considered my analysis could be enriched by examples of other events.

5.1.2. *Empirical cases*

The choice of those two case-studies has been made according to several criteria. First, they have to be seen as mass events, i.e. the organisers of such events should expect several thousands of participants. Secondly, they have to occur quite regularly (e.g. yearly) in order to be able to compare them in time. This still left me with a wide range of events to choose from. In order to facilitate my choice, I also took in account other constraints, such as feasibility of the field work and interviews, compatibility of the schedules and eventually personal interest for the events...

The festive event chosen is the Brussels Summer Festival (BSF). It has been taking place yearly in August since 2002 in various symbolic locations in Brussels city centre and has a rather wide audience: 60,000 visitors in 2018 (RTBF 2018b). One obstacle for this event is that it is not free of entry (since 2013). This means that specific security measures are always enforced to ensure that only guests that have paid their entry can come in. However, it appears from observations and interviews that other festivals, though free of entry (e.g. *Feërien* and *Fête de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles*), display the same type of security layouts. In 2018, the BSF took place during 5 days, which enabled me to conduct thorough observations at different times of the day and at different locations. In particular, I was able to observe the setting and taking down of the stages, as well as the operation of the security measures before, during and after the concerts.

The demonstration chosen is the unions' joined protest against the retirement regime reforms on 2 October 2018. The three Belgian unions (FGTB-ABVV, CSC-ACV, CGSLB-ACLVB) assembled as a joint union front regularly organise protests, mostly in Brussels, e.g. during strikes and to protest against the governmental neoliberal reforms. As the government attempts to pass such laws regularly and as some of them are already applied without all the unions' approval, such protests happen several times a year. This provides me with easily comparable case-studies. I have decided to compare the October 2018 edition to the unions' joined protest that took place on 6 November 2014. However, multiple differences between those two editions can already be pointed out, concerning the number of partakers (from 120,000 to 7,000 people), the itinerary of the protest, as well as its violent character (see section 7.3 for a thorough discussion). It is nevertheless interesting to compare the two events: first, considering the violent and polemic character of the 2014 edition, information sources should be prolific and easily accessible. They might focus more on the violent confrontation between some protesters and the police than on the peaceful part of the protest, but in the end, the policing of such confrontations is also the topic of this work. Second, the fact that the issue of the two protests

was different can only enrich the analysis, by enabling me to analyse different tactics. Third, despite these differences, common elements remain: these protests were organised by the same organisations and people, they have similar goals, and they are therefore potentially policed along the same framework.

After having collected information on these events using the methods mentioned below, I attempted to conduct a double diachronic comparison on the two case-studies as announced earlier. Eventually, the goal was also to compare the policing of a festive event and a protest, although the risks might be different. Beyond the formal comparison of the case-studies, data about other events were also mobilised to enrich the analysis. Indeed, I was given the opportunity to participate in preparatory meetings for two other events: one at the Town Hall in preparation for the 1st May celebration on Rouppe square, and one at the central police station for a protest organised by *Tout Autre Chose-Hart Boven Hard* (named ‘Right(s) NOW!’¹³). Although I was not able to look at those meetings for the chosen case-studies, they seem to be similar for most events. Therefore these complementary observations may be generalised, though with caution, to many other events. They were also included in the analysis of the four case-studies.

5.2. *Methodology techniques*

Investigating events that occurred during two different periods of time here requires to use different methods. For events that happened after the 2015-16 attacks, I investigated them in 2018, the year of my master thesis. Therefore it was possible to gather primary data by conducting *field observations*, taking *pictures* and conducting *semi-structured interviews* with specific stakeholders. In fact, several other researchers use those methods to gain knowledge about the methods and strategies of the police and how events are organised and designed (e.g. Noakes et al. 2005; Poupin 2012; Gillham et al. 2013; Pradel 2017). For events that I could not witness any more because they occurred before working on this thesis, data will be gathered using existing documents and pictures, as well as insights from the interviews.

5.2.1. *Ethnographies*

Conducting ethnographies is a crucial method in order to grasp how sanctuarisation is concretely implemented and what are the potential impacts (on public space and users on public space) of sanctuarisation. This means that I had to participate in the events, in order to observe material security layouts and the behaviour of security agents¹⁴. More concretely, the fieldwork for each event constituted of conducting observations from several precise observation points, as well as when walking between

¹³ Organisational information can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/events/932810073589531/>.

¹⁴ Here, security agents include all people responsible for the security of the studied event, and more specifically: police members (in uniform or not), private security guards, as well as stewards.

those points: I stood outside the privatised perimeter near its entrance, inside the perimeter near an emergency exit, in front and in the back of a protest, and walked inside and outside of the perimeter... Indeed, for a single researcher, an overview of all security practices at one point in time was impossible.

Moreover, the intrinsic nature of such events, mobile and/or agitated, and happening in a vast perimeter, made such observation challenging. Because the festival was taking place during 5 days, it was partly possible to overcome this obstacle: I could conduct observations on several days, allowing me to focus on different times of the day, particular places and thus on particular processes – and also to avoid too long periods of observation. I was also anxious that extended observation of security agents might make them suspicious and force me to leave the place, but this did not happen: most of the places where I was standing were still crowded and I passed easily for a participant in the event. It was important to me to experiment sanctuarisation directly (both from the inside and the outside of the sanctuarised perimeter) and thus I also behaved like any participant in these events: as a participant observer, I also sometimes stood in the audience watching the concert, used the paths defined by organisers to go from one stage to the other, and walked along with other protesters.

I recorded my observations by taking notes (in a notebook or more discretely using a phone), pictures and/or videos. Poupin (2012, p. 2) highlights the advantage of audio and video recordings when observing the policing of a protest: they enable the researcher to be more conscious of what is happening and to anticipate the events in order to document them better. When possible, video recordings were also used here, but pictures were easier to take and to include in the final work.

5.2.2. *Documentary research*

The previously quoted authors also gather complementary information about the events from different sources: press and other media, online blogs written by activists or not, legal and police documents, and even potential existing scientific literature dedicated to them... Such types of documents will also be used here, for events that happened in both time periods. Especially, I have used pictures publicly available on social networks (mostly Twitter and Facebook) and taken by people that were present on the day of the festival or the protest. However, social networks users may not always be aware that what they post publicly online is public (Ahmed et al. 2017), and thus such pictures shall be handled with caution. For events that took place before 2015, these pictures could even constitute an equivalent to ethnographies, though a slightly unsatisfying one. As I was not present on those days, I still needed some evidence of the security measures, in order to corroborate the information I collected with the interviews. Moreover, multiplying the sources can help me corroborate information or opinions from interviews or other sources as well as confirm or infirm other suppositions.

Of course, pictures are not a very objective source, because they are always a selection of the reality. An ethnography is however not more objective because the observer has many bias – although they can be conscious of them while it is not feasible to research in depth the multiple photographers' bias. Moreover, if the photographers did not aim for security measures when taking their pictures, many of them could reveal useless, and it is possible that several security measures were not photographed. The relevant pictures have been selected using specific hashtags in the research tool of social networks (e.g. #betoging6nov, #mani6nov, #bsf14...) and by going through Facebook pictures albums. For the November 6, 2014 protest, I relied on a previous collection of pictures conducted by L. Melgaço in 2014 in preparation for a university class, as well as pictures he and other photographers took on that day. A second, visual, filter was applied on the selection: I selected only the pictures that could indicate the location of the event and/or the presence and the absence of specific security measures. Therefore, pictures only showing groups of people were not selected¹⁵. The analysis of the selected pictures does not aim to understand how each event has been perceived, commented and diffused on social networks. It only focused on inventorying the security measures and behaviours of the security agents for each event.

In total, unequal numbers of pictures (from 4 to 193) per event have been found and can support the diachronic analysis. One can assume that the number of pictures available for each event depends on their audience (the more people attending the event, the more pictures taken) and on the attention given to the event. For example, the 6/11/2014 protest has received a lot of media attention considering the massive mobilisation and the outbursts of violence that occurred at its end. On the other hand, a lot less pictures were found for the BSF editions, perhaps because the photographers in the audience privileged private Facebook sharing instead of Twitter public sharing (as it was done for the protest). Moreover, many of the pictures found for the BSF only feature groups of people, without any relevant information in the background, and were thus ignored. In such a case where it was difficult to rely on the pictures, it was still possible to corroborate insights from interviews with other interviews and the other supplementary documents.

The latter include press reports and articles from activists' blogs and posts on social networks. Similarly, a lot more articles were found concerning the 6/11/2014 protest than the three other events investigated. This can be explained by the fact that anytime there is a confrontation between protesters and the police, or illegal action by the police, this will be documented as much as possible by activists, attempting to prove police action and institution illegitimate. Again, the focus was put on the security measures and behaviours of the security agents for each event.

5.2.3. *Interviews*

15 An exhaustive list of the hashtags used as well as the amount of pictures collected can be found in annex F.

Additionally, I conducted 30 semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, taken at each level of the organisation and the operation of the security of an event: police officers and inspectors, events organisers and security coordinators, stewards¹⁶ etc. The objective of the interviews was to learn more about their specific role in this process, to understand their missions, their aims and the legal framework of their action, as well as to listen to their point of view on those issues. They could also inform me of the security measures that were implemented when they were in charge of an event. Only part of the interviewees (approx 60%) occupied the same function in 2014 as in 2019 (the year of my interviews) and could inform me of the changes that they have witnessed over time.

At first, I was a little apprehensive of organizing and conducting such interviews, as the interviewees could be reluctant to talk about their protection techniques in the antiterrorist context. This only happened twice (out of 30 interviews). Surprisingly, police members were quite easy to access, once the first interview with one of them was done. Security coordinators of festive events were the most difficult people to gain access to, mainly due to an overcharge of work. The interviewees were mostly contacted either via personal contacts or via the contact mail address of their organization. I also published an announcement on social media to find some stewards at the BSF, but this was not really successful. The most efficient way to contact the interviewees was via the snow ball method: for example, after interviewing a union's security coordinator, he gave me the contact of a police officer, that in turn gave me several other contacts in the police at the end of his interview.

Most of the interviews lasted around 1 hour, but a few of them were also much shorter (15 minutes) or much longer (up to 2.5 hours). They were all conducted in the offices of the interviewees, except for three of them with stewards of a union that I interviewed during a protest in the European neighbourhood. I also conducted some informal interviews with protesters, either during protests or during small meetings. On 3 occasions, interviewees offered to do a group interview, with one or two of their colleagues, and I agreed. Such a configuration has both disadvantages and advantages: the trust between me and the interviewees might be more difficult to establish and they might self-censor in front of their colleagues. On the other hand, they could also complete each other's discourses, or even debate with each other. In practice, these interviews went quite well and it was convenient for me to conduct them for time reasons.

It is interesting to look briefly at the composition of the panel. The vast majority of the interviewees (more than 80%) are men, possibly illustrating a high ratio of men in jobs concerning security, in all organisations I contacted. 45% of the interviewees are police members and 40% of the interviewees play a role in the security of a protest (versus 33% playing a role in the security of a festive event and

16 For a complete list of the interviewees, see annex B. For the guide of the semi-structured interviews, see annex C.

25% playing a role in both). These figures do not radically vary when taking in account the duration of the interviews.

Given that most of the interviewees occupy key positions in the organization of an event's security in public space, the anonymity was only given to those that asked for it and to the people that do not occupy key and/or public positions (e.g. stewards). Every interviewee accepted that I record our discussions, which enabled me to listen again to the interviews and write down the most relevant elements and quotations. I also used the Sonal software to cut each recording into multiple thematic extracts. One of the advantages of doing this is the possibility of listening again to several extracts from different interviews about the same thematic (e.g. "tasks of the police") if necessary during my analysis (Alber 2012).

In most of the cases, the discourses of the interviewees focused on their actions and what security measures were implemented. Interviewees such as police members would also deliver discourses about their aims and their work philosophy, which was equally interesting. However, punctually, there was some confusion in their discourses between their work philosophy and their practices – supposedly they could have justified their practices with their work philosophy, or kept silent about some of their practices that do not match their work philosophy. This produces bias that could be resumed in this question: can one completely trust interviewees? Of course not, but one can analyse their discourses and be conscious of their bias as both actor and narrator of their practices. It is also possible to attempt objectifying such discourses, by using a diversity of qualitative methods (ethnographies, documentary research and interviews with multiple stakeholders), on the case-studies as well as on a wide range of other events studied marginally.

Festive events & protests	Scientific literature	Press reports, blogs, official reports...	Recordings (pictures, video...) from social networks	Participant field-observation	Recordings (pictures, video...) by the author	Semi-structured interviews
< 2015	x	x	x			x
2018-19		x	x	x	x	x

Table 2: Synthesis of the methodologies (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

SECOND PART

The aim of sections 6 and 7 is to thoroughly describe and analyse how the four case-studies were policed. Based on my methodology, I provide contextual information as well as empirical elements on the four events. Since this work is a comparative work and in order to avoid redundancy, common elements for the same event in different years are not necessarily explicitly described twice. I start with the description and the comparison of the policing of the two editions of the festive event chosen as a case study, namely the Brussels Summer Festival. Further on, I describe and compare the policing of the protests chosen as case-studies. The 2018 editions are presented first because they are supported by ethnographies, which can also help understand the 2014 editions. Each description is followed by a diachronic comparison of the two editions and a generalisation based on other examples which both support an explanation of the main evolutions of policing of each type of event between before and after the 2015-16 terrorist attacks.

6. Festive events policing

6.1. Case-study 1: Brussels Summer Festival 2018

6.1.1. *General organisation*

“The preparation is the most important step, afterwards it’s almost a routine”¹⁷. The preparation of the festival includes several steps and mobilises a vast diversity of actors which I describe before summarizing the ethnographies.

Until 2017, the festival was organised by Brussels city association *Festival des Musiques* and its security and logistics were organised by the city’s organisation for “major events” (*Brussels Major Events* (BME), also in charge of *Plaisirs d’Hiver* (Brussels Christmas market) and of concerts on the *Grand Place*). It was recently (approx. in 2017) transferred for financial and political reasons to the city’s association in charge of exhibitions and concerts on Heysel: *Brussels Expo* (Fadoul 2018, interview with G. Campé, logistics and security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019). However the BME logistics and security coordinator (G. Campé) still helped the security coordinators of Brussels Expo (D. Lambert & S. Feldbusch) as an advisor in 2018 and could do so in 2019 too. They also work with a freelance logistics and security planner, in charge of designing the plan of the festival and of its installations. This person also intervenes in many other festivals and has contacts in several logistics and security companies. In fact, subcontractors are engaged to operate the logistics and staff. A contract is drawn with an agreed private security company in charge of providing security agents.

17 Interview with D. Lambert, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

Volunteers (servers and stewards) are hired through another association dependent of Brussels City: *Rock the City*. The latter is also responsible for the festival logistics: putting up, taking down, managing the stages and other temporary infrastructures (e.g. tents, fences etc.), which are rented to multiple suppliers.

A large dialogue with external actors also takes place before the festival: “we organise meetings all the time. Communication is really the basis of organisation”¹⁸. Organisers have to file in a form to the city’s events office (which manages and controls all the events organised in the city¹⁹), specifying all technical aspects of the festival, i.e. its locations, its dates, the kind of material (fencing) used, if and when electricity is needed, where will the emergency exits be situated... In addition, they are asked to conduct a ‘risk analysis’ of the event, listing the risks and the ways in which they will address them. The risk analysis primarily addresses crowd management. According to event characteristics such as the type of event, the type of public and the number of people expected, relevant measures are planned (number of entries, emergency exits or medical staff etc.). Criminal and terrorist risks are also taken in account in this analysis and measures are planned accordingly (see below). A meeting is then organised at the town hall by the city’s events office. It gathers (see also Figure 3):

- the organiser and potentially their sub-contractor(s) charged with planning the logistics and security of the event;
- the police;
- actors in charge of emergency intervention planning: the regional coordination for emergency medical aid (*CoAMU*), the firefighters (*SIAMU*), the emergency planning deputy officer of the mayor (*PlanU*);
- if relevant, actors in charge of mobility (STIB, SNCB, ...) and in charge of green spaces.

Loïs Boulanger, emergency planning deputy officer of the mayor explains the process as follows:

“Brussels city’s events office receives the form [...] and each event is dispatched to the competent services: culture, sport... because there are far too many requests to organise events, so a single service cannot handle all of them. Besides that, there are other services, like us emergency planning: we review all the events and make remarks according to the type of event, the size... For events that happen in a park or in its vicinity, the green spaces service also makes comments. This is how we operate and the events office coordinates all services, organises meetings and manages the file... until the file arrives at the city council which authorises the event. [...] But we have approx. 1000 festive events in the city of Brussels, so we can't have meetings for all the events.”²⁰

18 Interview with S. Feldbusch, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

19 The city’s events office (in French ‘*la cellule Events*’) does not have the same role as BME. The city’s events office manages and controls the organisation of all the events, public or private, that occur on the territory of the city. The BME is an association (asbl) under the authority of the tourism and events alderwoman, which organises events in Brussels.

20 Interview, 03/04/2019.

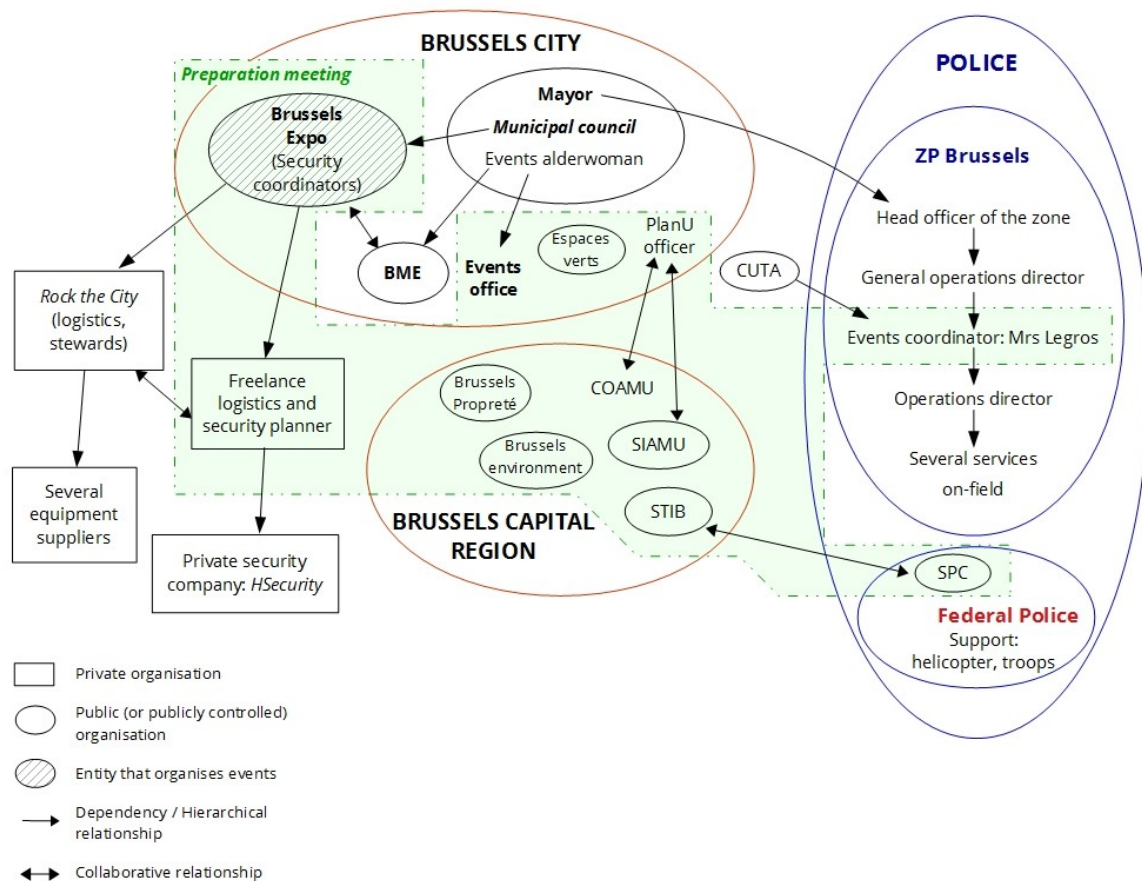


Figure 3: Schematic view of actors involved in BSF preparation (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

All these actors have made their own risk analysis and can make comments about arrangements that they find harmful or ineffective, could hinder their potential intervention, or do not comply with the legislation. The meeting is ended when the plan proposed by the organisers and amendments are agreed, and the preparation of the festival can continue with, notably, several other meetings with each stakeholder in particular (e.g. the police). These comments mostly have a non-mandatory status but they are written in the minutes of the meeting. In case they were not followed and something went wrong, this enables the public authorities to be ‘relieved’ of their responsibilities by claiming that the organiser was perfectly informed and did not follow the recommendations. Additionally, the organisers have to file in a “privatisation” form to the mayor: “there must be an administrative privatisation of the site that allows security agents to perform searches on a site”²¹. Temporarily “privatising” a public space enables an organiser to be responsible for its security (see below).

During the festival itself security coordinators meet everyday with the staff in order to debrief what happened the day before and to make arrangements for the coming day based on that experience. Most importantly, the police organise an operational “command centre”, where they ask each so-

21 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

called “discipline”²², as well as Brussels Expo security coordinators, to send a “liaising agent”²³. The PlanU officer and liaising officers of STIB and railway police are present too. In this room, one can see what happens in the festival through the police fixed cameras (if necessary, additional mobile cameras would have been installed). According to several interviewees, this is where everyone will coordinate in case of an emergency, by exchanging informations and taking informed decisions in order to organise the emergency procedure. It is however mostly used preventively:

“The command centre is opened for big events. [...] It's preventive, it's not really like working during a disaster where we're all going to be there. [...] If we know that we have an event where roads are blocked, for example because of safety measures [for the event], we always ask for a liaising officer at the command centre to make the daily life of these services [e.g. firefighters] a little easier: they can guide them by saying "be careful, you cannot go this way".”²⁴

Eventually, once the festival is over, a general debriefing is organised after the event, at least internally and with all actors in case a problem occurred during the festival.

6.1.2. *Location, fencing and access control*

The 2018 edition of the BSF took place during five days in August and hosted around 60,000 people²⁵ on four stages: *Place des Palais*, *Mont des Arts*, *Place du Musée* and the concert hall *La Madeleine* (RTBF 2018b). All stages were situated in Brussels municipality, between the Central station and Brussels Park (see Figure 4). All three open air stages were completely enclosed using Heras temporary fences, covered up with black covers. The map of the festival, the list of forbidden objects or even advertisements were sometimes printed on those covers, e.g. near the entrances and exits (Picture 1). According to Geoffroy Campé, security coordinator at the BME, Heras fences have many advantages:

“[They] are much higher than Nadar barriers, and it is much more difficult to go over them: there are small pikes on top of them, it's not nice to go over them. [...] We'll cover them up if we need to hide what is behind them. [...] Any time we need to close an area and make it inaccessible, we use Heras fences. [...] It's the system of non-perennial fences, that are easy to place but hard to cross”²⁶.

22 These “disciplines” designate the critical actors in case of an emergency. There are 5 of them, in order: (1) firefighters, (2) medical, sanitary and psychosocial emergency services, (3) the police, (4) logistical support, (5) communication to the general public by the representative of the authority (Bruxelles Prévention et Sécurité [no date]). Generally only disciplines 1, 2 and 3 are concerned by such events.

23 Interview with S. Feldbusch, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

24 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

25 This was the first time that the festival lasted only 5 days – the previous editions lasted 10 days. However, according to the BSF director F. Gentile, the 5-day formula is slightly more profitable, based on the number of visitors per day and considering that 115,000 people visited the festival in 2017 (Coljon 2018).

26 Interview, 19/03/2019.

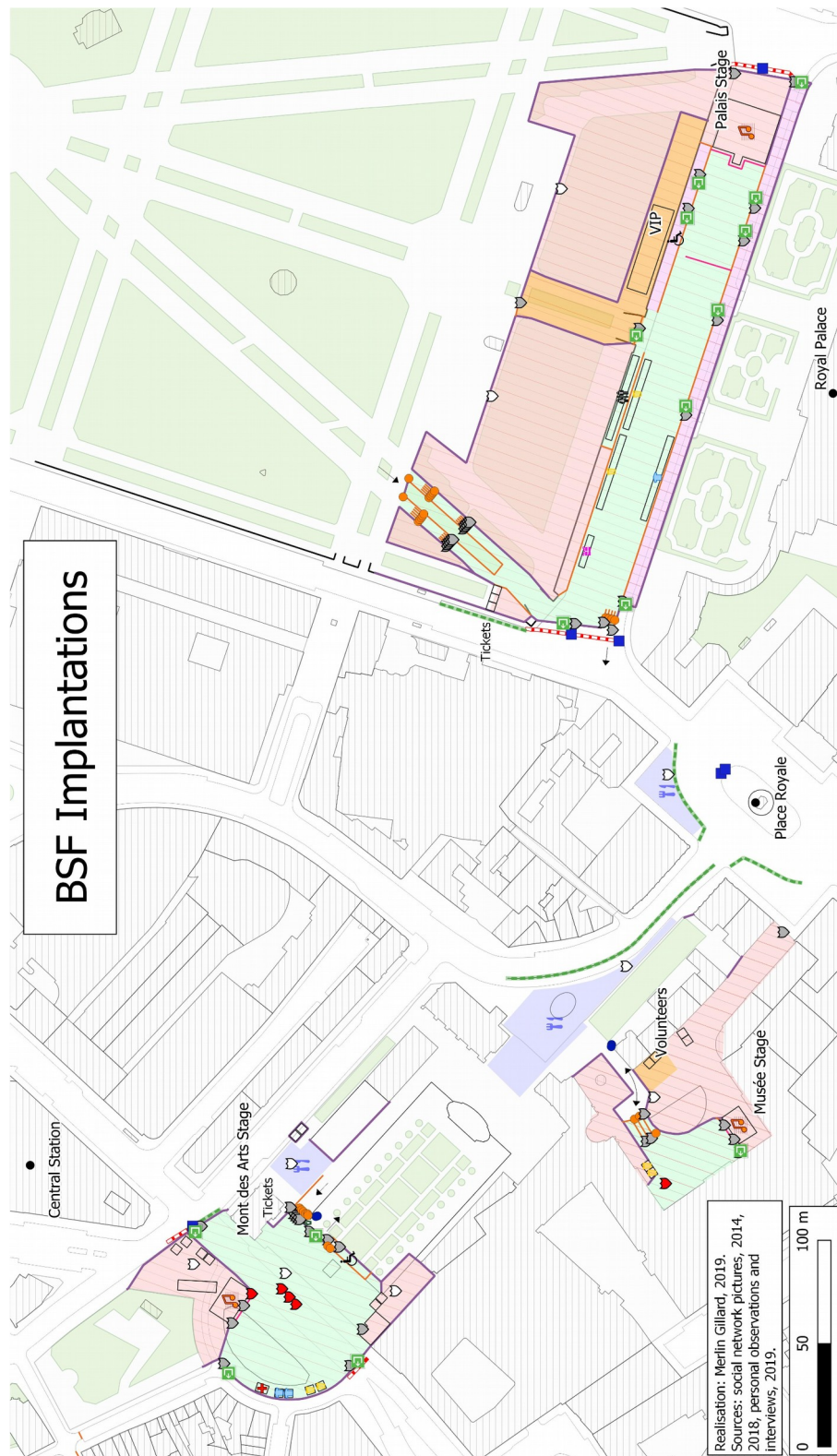


Figure 4: BSF Implantations and stages, 2018 (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

KEY FOR ALL BSF MAPS

Fencing

-  Heras temporary fence
-  Nadar barrier
-  Jersey plastic barrier
-  Jersey concrete barrier
-  Frontstage crash barrier
-  Direction (entries/exits)

Staff

-  Stewards
-  Security agent for searches
-  Mobile security agent
-  Security agent at night
-  Police agent

Infrastructure

-  Temporary infrastructure
-  Red Cross
-  Toilets
-  Main stage
-  Merchandise shop
-  Bin
-  Bar
-  Sponsor stand
-  Zone for disabled people
-  Emergency Exit
-  Police Van

Main Zones

-  Catering area
-  Zone open to the audience after having passed the double control
-  Stage & backstage, closed to public
-  VIP or stewards zones
-  Emergency corridor
-  'Privatised' zone
-  Building
-  Block
-  Sidewalk
-  Water
-  Park
-  Point of Interest



Picture 1: Covered Heras barriers with the list of forbidden objects, Place des Palais (author's picture, 14/08/2018).



Picture 2: Jersey barriers and the Coudenberg catering zone (author's picture, 14/08/2018).



Picture 3: Place Royale catering zone (author's picture, 15/08/2018).



Picture 4: Mont des Arts stage entrance (author's picture, 14/08/2018).



Figure 5: Entrance and exit at the Palais stage, 2018 (Merlin Gillard, 2019).



Picture 6: Sign indicating the start of the privatised area, Brussels Park (author's picture, 14/08/2018).



Picture 5: Sign indicating the end of the privatised area, Brussels Park (author's picture, 16/08/2018).

Between the three stages, catering zones were also installed on public space: on *Place Royale*, on *Coudenberg* and on *Mont des Arts* (see Figure 4, in blue). Those zones were not protected using Heras fences, but were separated from traffic using Jersey concrete barriers (see Picture 2 and Picture 3). Thus they were also free of access for anyone. This was not the case for the stages, because the entrance to the festival was charged. A double control was set at their entrance:

“The entry is organised as follows: 4 lanes, separated by Nadar barriers. People are first controlled by BSF staff checking the validity of the entry bracelets. 10 meters after, a safety check is carried out by private security agents: they ask people to open their bags, in order to check if they have any forbidden object. People without bags are quickly glanced at, and sometimes security agents perform quick palpations (no pattern has been identified). Most people don’t have any forbidden object, and most objects that are pointed out are water plastic bottles. [...] If they want to come in, people are asked to empty them, and to put them aside in a big box (or in a bin). They can take them back when going out. Other commonly refused objects include umbrellas and motorbike helmets. It often takes a few minutes of negotiation for the security agents to explain to people with forbidden objects the different options. I have not noticed any violent conversations nor people that do not wish to comply to the rules. The list of forbidden objects is clearly displayed on signs or even covers. It also includes cameras, tripods, lasers, dogs (except guide dogs)... and weapons”²⁷ (see Picture 1, Picture 4 and Figure 5).

Plastic water bottles were forbidden, except in case of intense heat: full, they could be thrown at someone and hurt them. This is also the official reason that waiters and waitresses had to open the bottles they served to visitors. However anyone could pass the entrance with a drink in a reusable glass, because that would have been bought at one of the official bars. According to commissioner Christelle Legros, police should always be nearby security agents: “in general, we are always close by, ready to intervene. If there’s a prohibited object during the search, we are the ones who must seize it and do the judicial duty. We should also be able to intervene if there’s a dangerous situation”²⁸.

Security agents have to be at the entrance in any case because stewards do not have the power to physically refuse access to visitors if they do not have a valid ticket: “stewards have been told that if there’s a problem with someone who doesn’t have a ticket and insists in coming in, they can call a security agent which is posted further on in the line”²⁹. This is in accordance with the most recent legislation: the task of “access control” is reserved to security agents (Jambon 2018, p. 6). As they are already present on the spot, they might as well perform searches of the visitors: “anything that is a paying event means ticket controls, so also searches, since the agents are there”³⁰. Usually private security agents are not allowed to perform searches, frisking or surveillance in public space (MB 2017). Here however, these public places, now enclosed, are considered private thanks to the

27 Field notes excerpt, 14/08/2018.

28 Interview, 10/04/2019.

29 Interview with D. Lambert, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

30 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

administrative “privatisation”. As mentioned previously, this privatisation has to be authorised by the mayor for a precise period (i.e. from the stages installation to their disassembly of the stages through the entire duration of the festival) and signs that indicate the limits of the privatised area have to be put up (Picture 5, Picture 6). Privatising the site enables private security agents to exert their tasks (watch the premises, perform searches...). Police can however still intervene if necessary. “The police can perform [searches], because by default they have the right to, but there’s no event police in the region. [...] They come as support.”³¹ For the BSF, this privatisation can even be informally extended to the ‘catering zones’, according to S. Feldbusch:

“Searches are relatively simple, because we are on a privatized public space, with the authorization of the mayor. [...] On the other hand, in other places, it’s more complicated [on the map, he shows me the Coudenberg catering area]: we’re in a grey area, between public space and privatised public space. These are all food trucks, but in reality it’s public space. But since we’re in good collaboration with the city and the police, security agents can also watch the foodtrucks.”³²

When visitors exited the stages, stewards were also waiting for them and scanned their bracelets a second time: “they had to scan people’s bracelets in order to know how many people where in the stages”³³, which can be useful in case of an evacuation, to know of any missing people. A security agent was also standing at the exit, ensuring that no one could come in through that way, excepted the authorised people recognisable with their bracelet (Picture 7). Disabled people, press, BSF staff, volunteers carrying a beer barrel, security agents and the police could use the exit both as a way in and out and would be filtered by that security agent. To help him, he had a list of the bracelets authorised per day: “we give all our agents bracelets with the colour of the day, to avoid that agents not on duty come in for free”³⁴. The other main task of the security agent standing at the exit was to answer visitors questions on the location of some other stage, the toilets, the box office etc. The entrances and exits were structured using Nadar barriers, that separate the crowd into different lines, in order to speed up the filtering. Thus they were quite flexible: in cases of big affluence, security agents would create more lines with additional Nadar barriers; and in cases of stampede, they would take out all the Nadar barriers in order to let the crowd flow out more easily.

Emergency exits, regularly distributed on each stage and highlighted by several large signs, were permanently watched by a security agent in order to forbid anyone to try entering or going out by that way and constituted of a Heras fence tied to the neighbouring fences (easily removable given that the security agent has the right equipment). The configuration of the stage on *Place des Palais* enabled the organisers to set two emergency corridors on each side of the stage (Figure 5), separated by Nadar barriers, where Red Cross volunteers were stationed and where an ambulance could drive if

31 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

32 Interview with S. Feldbusch, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

33 Interview with Clara*, volunteer barwoman at BSF, 12/04/2019. All names followed by an asterisk have been changed.

34 Interview with S. Feldbusch, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

necessary. This is also a requirement due to the high capacity of that stage (up to 12,000 people): in case of an emergency and of a panicking crowd, the corridors would be open and provide a feeling of ‘decompression’ for the crowd³⁵. Next to emergency exits that lead to a road, there was always a police van, protecting the way out from a vehicle attack. At the same time, such arrangement ensured that it was possible for an ambulance to access to the stage if necessary and thus a police officer always had to be onboard, ready to move the vehicle. Indeed, “the priority is to be able to let emergency services through. Because the terrorist threat is real, but the most frequent risk is people fainting or fire, so emergency services must be able to easily access the concerned place”³⁶. As one can see on the maps (Figure 6), where Heras fences closed a road, Jersey barriers (Picture 8) were placed along them, also as a protection against vehicle attacks, but a less flexible one.

‘Frontstage crash barriers’ were also placed in front of stages to keep the audience away from the artists (Picture 10) and watched over by security agents. It can be noted that the privatised areas were divided into different zones, e.g. dedicating some zones to special guests. First, in the *Palais* zone, a VIP zone, accessible on invitation and for the artists; second, in the *Musée* zone, an area accessible only to volunteers, in order for them to rest after a day of work. Again, these zones were separated from the rest of the area with Heras fences or Nadar barriers and the access to these zones was strictly controlled by security agents which examined one’s bracelets before letting them in.

Lastly, regular municipal fixed bins were all sealed. Next to them temporary bins were installed with transparent bags. This saves time for security agents and police when securing a place:

“Most bins are closed, [...] to make sure that no one puts a bomb in it but also to facilitate recognition by the police or by security agents if there was a bomb threat. [...] We know that they are not to be checked if they have remained sealed”³⁷ (Picture 9).

6.1.3. *Main roles of police and security agents*

Security agents were responsible for the security of the privatised area (and beyond, see below) and had multiple tasks at different locations. I have already mentioned performing searches of the visitors, guarding entrances and exits of the stages and guarding the front of stages. In fact they were positioned at strategic locations, including near emergency exits and locations of interests (e.g. sound controls, artists entrance). Mobile security agents would also mingle in the crowd and would be available to help anyone in need or as back-up.

35 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

36 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

37 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.



Picture 7: Mont des Arts stage exit (author's picture, 14/08/2018).



Picture 8: Jersey barriers, police car and emergency exit, Monts des Arts stage (author's picture, 14/08/2018).

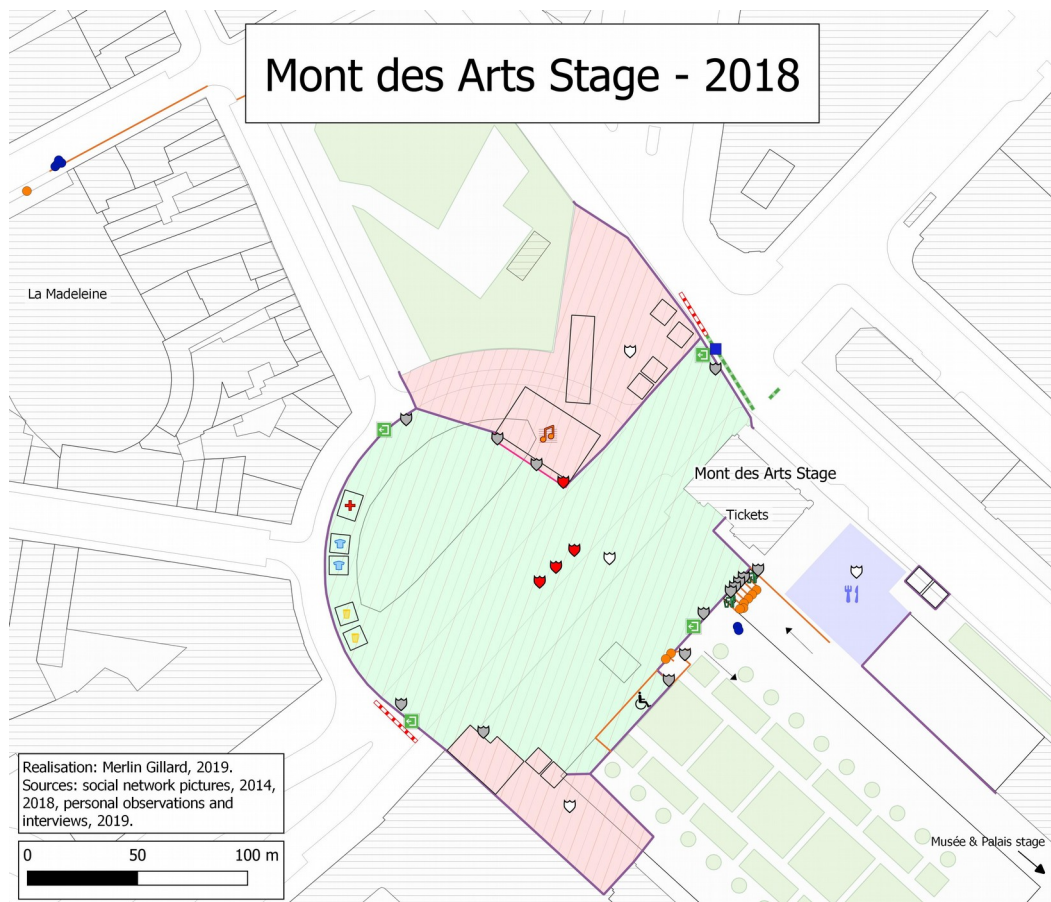
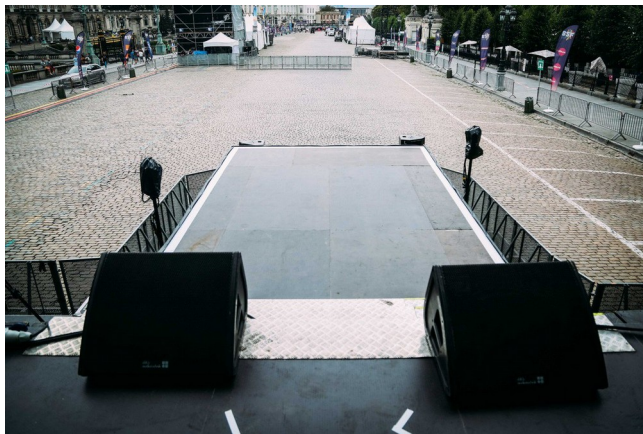


Figure 6: Mont des Arts stage, 2018 (Merlin Gillard , 2019).



Picture 10: Front of stage barriers, Place des Palais (BSF Twitter account, 15/08/2018).



Picture 9: Bins, Coudenberg (author's picture, 14/08/2018).

The police, in uniform and wearing a bulletproof vest, were also quite present during the concerts, watching the entrance of the stage on *Place du Musée* and patrolling on foot in public space as well as in the privatised areas. Their main role was to carry out what they see as a reassuring presence, but also to assist security agents if necessary. They could intervene on their own though: according to C. Legros, commissioner in charge of events at Brussels police, brigades targeting aggressions and pickpocketing were also present on site³⁸.

Both staff performed several other tasks when the festival was closed (i.e. approximately from 1 AM to 6 PM). Security agents watched and patrolled around the premises, sometimes with a dog. This includes all three stages (inside and outside), to make sure that no one would penetrate the enclosed area and potentially steal drinks or valuables, break something or even place an explosive. For example, the *Mont des Arts* stage was open (and the boulevard too), enabling traffic and pedestrians to go through it, except for *Place de l'Albertine* where the main stage and stands were set (see Figure 6, Picture 11 and Picture 13). The square was completely enclosed during the day using Nadar fences and a guard had to stay next to the boulevard in order to forbid pedestrians to use it. On the other hand, catering zones were not enclosed but foodtrucks remained parked there for the whole duration of the festival and needed protection as well. Thus security agents also patrolled around them. Although in slightly smaller numbers, they also watched the stages while they were being set up and taken down before and after the festival.



Picture 11: Mont des Arts stage during the day (author's picture, 16/08/2018).



Picture 12: Mont des Arts stage during the day (author's picture, 16/08/2018).

38 Interview, 10/04/2019.

Another task of security agents was to conduct people out of the stage when the concert was over:

“We always let half an hour after the end of the last concert so that bars remain open and people can continue to drink. [...] We close the closest bars from the stage, we form a line with the Red Cross and our stewards and we move forward, step by step, until everyone is out. But there’s beer, people have been drinking, so we often have problems. [...] For the BSF, we are bound by a precise schedule to open the street again, because of public transport.”³⁹

“At the end of the festival, guards made people leave, but sometimes it was even the police who did it. When the concert is over, they evacuate the stage very quickly because they have to restore the Place des Palais, [...] to clean it and give access... [to the security corridor reopened to traffic]. So it was a bit of a security rush to get everything out.”⁴⁰

What the interviewees explain here is how organisers met the urgent need to restore a free access for traffic to part of the privatised area (Figure 4, Figure 6). On *Mont des Arts* stage, the whole width of *Boulevard de l’Empereur* was re-open. On *Palais* stage, this was only one lane along the *Royal Palace* (formerly one of the emergency corridors), notably used by buses. In order to open those parts of the area, a tight schedule had to be met, particularly so that municipal cleaning services could clean the area from all the litter produced by such an event. This led to strange scenes where security agents opened the exit gates completely and formed a line in order to let people out while ensuring that no one comes back in. They synchronically moved forward, chasing out the visitors. At the same time, police had stopped traffic on *rue Royale*, using their vans, parked in the middle of the street, in order to protect the crowd and to ensure the exiting flow goes smoothly. The night when I observed it, it did not provoke any incident, except for some protestations. Visitors were even escorted out until *Place Royale*, where they could go have a last meal and/or drink in the catering area or take transports back home (Figure 4).

These free accesses for traffic were maintained until the next day of festival: a few hours before stages were open to the public, traffic accesses were closed again, and the police performed a ‘sweeping’⁴¹: a thorough search of the enclosed area with police and police dogs, looking for potential hidden explosives or other dangerous material. In fact, the sweeping also took place on the free of access part of *Mont des Arts*, where the police scrutinised the numerous bushes.

6.1.4. Medical and commercial arrangements

Over the last pages, I have briefly described how the BSF was policed. Given the definition chosen (see p. 10), this does not include arrangements made for medical aid. Indeed, aside from security apparatuses, mostly designed to prevent and repress risks, sometimes risks do realise and emergency aid has to be provided – this ranges from small benign injuries to wider traumas and catastrophes.

³⁹ Interview with D. Lambert and S. Feldbusch, security coordinators at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

⁴⁰ Interview with Clara*, volunteer barwoman at BSF, 12/04/2019.

⁴¹ This is the word used by interviewees in French (derived from the verb ‘to sweep’).

On all stages, Red Cross volunteers were ready to help anyone in need. The staff as a whole also had to call help if they saw any situation of someone being hurt, or generally any situation of danger. According to the risk analysis, taking in account the number of people awaited and material constraints, emergency exits were planned on all stages. Their location was indicated by multiple large signs and wide screens. In addition, a standard procedure for the evacuation of a large event in case of a catastrophe was followed, notably by choosing and keeping empty a large place to host a temporary gathering place and victims centre with an advanced medical station. In the same idea, the regional coordination for emergency aid plans which hospitals of the region ambulances shall be directed to. Such elements are critically relevant to ensure that the event goes well, contributing to the sanctuarisation process.

It is also interesting to briefly examine the commercial dimension of the festival. Aside the paying entry (75€ for the 5-day pass and 35€ for the 1-day pass), several bars were set up on the stages, next to shops selling the artists' merchandising. Sponsors of the festival (radios, lottery, taxis, insurance companies etc.) also had stands, both inside and outside the privatised perimeter of the *Palais* stage and some of their employees would distribute advertisement flyers to the visitors of the festival. The two main stages in themselves were sponsored: they were named after two large companies (an insurance company for *Place des Palais* and a phone company for *Mont des Arts*). Additionally, approximately 30 food trucks and bars were installed in the aforementioned catering zones, out of the privatised perimeters so that anyone could access them. They seemed to be visited mostly by visitors of the festival, but other users of the city could have visited them as well.

6.2. Case-study 2: Brussels Summer Festival 2014

Less sources are available for the description of the 2014 edition which is thus more limited: it is based on 45 pictures collected from social networks, 2 press articles, and 10 interviews (see section 5.2). It is also supported by 18 pictures taken in 2013 – making the assumption that the security measures were similar in 2013 and 2014. A lot has already been described previously that did not change between the two editions. I will thus describe only their main differences.

6.2.1. *General organisation*

Generally, the same actors were involved in 2014 and 2018. The preparation process involving risk analyses and meetings was similar too. However the complexity of the planning and risk analysis was certainly lower in 2014: the terrorist threat was not yet added to that of stampede. “Before [the attacks], our risk analysis was much more focused on crowd movements, we didn't yet have this idea of terrorist attacks.”⁴²

42 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

6.2.2. Location, fencing and access control

The BSF 2014 took place during ten days in August and hosted 125,000 people on two stages: *Place des Palais* and *Mont des Arts* (RTBF 2014a). *Place du Musée* and *La Madeleine* were not used at that time. The general setup was however very similar to the one in 2018: Heras fences enclosed the sites, searches were performed at the entry etc. Indeed, because it is a paying event, the access has to be controlled and the organisers have to ensure that no one comes in without a ticket by enclosing the stages with Heras temporary fences. This was not generally the case for all festive events (see below). Only the entrances setups were different: on *Palais*, the exits and entrances were situated at the same place (Picture 13), which was also more central (Figure 7).



Picture 13: Palais stage entrance in 2014 (scarabee05 Twitter account, 08/08/2014).

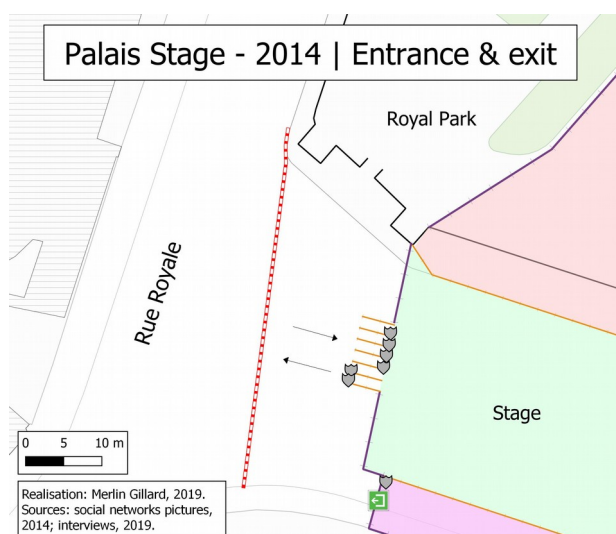


Figure 7: Entrance & exit of Palais stage, 2014 (Merlin Gillard, 2019).



Picture 14: Mont des Art stage entrance and control in 2014 (Twitter : scarabee05, 08/08/2014).

It seems that controls at the entrance were less intensive in 2014 and before. Whether bags were searched or not is rather vague, but it is quite safe to write that controls were focused on ticket control and searches would mostly be conducted in case of suspicious appearance. No ticket control was performed at the exit.

“Security checks always happened: before the attacks, we already looked at the bags but we didn't systematically search people. Now we're not doing it either, but we look at people, how they're dressed, [...] that makes sense. Before, the check was more to make sure that all visitors had paid their ticket. [...] Now there's a scanning [(control of the bracelets)]. We also do the scanning at the exit because now we have to know the number of people in each place.”⁴³

“There were searches before the attacks, not systematic, but in a concert configuration they were always carried out.”⁴⁴

“I think [searches] were conducted only the last few years, [...] after the Paris bombings. Now there are more controls on drinks and backpacks and they advise people to bring only small bags. Before, they checked only your bracelet but now they also check bags each time. In addition to that there are searches sometimes, and frankly I found it a little weird. So you have to separate lines, man/woman. [...] In case they have a suspicion, they have the right to perform frisking. [...] Before you couldn't take your drinks with you on the site, and it's always like that now.”⁴⁵

Available pictures (Picture 14, Picture 15) suggest that controls were performed by stewards first and security agents later on. However the organisation of controls seems less complex than in 2018: entries were situated at the same place than exits, less guards were present, and less lines were planned in order to perform controls⁴⁶.



Picture 15: View on Palais stage, 2013. At the bottom of the picture, the entrance control (BSF Facebook account, 12/08/2013).

43 Interview with D. Lambert, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

44 Interview with D. Caes, security officer at visit.brussels, 28/03/2019.

45 Interview with Clara*, volunteer barwoman at BSF, 12/04/2019.

46 However, this might also be due to the fact that less visitors per day were expected (see above).

Emergency exits were also regularly arranged and watched by security agents. Frontstage barriers were installed too, as for any (open air) concert. However no thought had been given to protecting stages against vehicle attacks: “Obviously, since the attacks, the system has been revised and much improved, to avoid vehicle attacks and so on. The risk of an attack can no longer be overlooked”⁴⁷. Only plastic Jersey barriers (i.e. not concrete ones) were arranged in front of the entrance as a way to divert traffic (Picture 15, Figure 7).

6.2.3. Main roles of police and security agents, medical and commercial arrangements

Allegedly, crowd management measures did not change much between 2014 and 2018 and what has been described previously concerning the role of police and security agents was also valid for the 2014 edition. However, the intensity of the policing and the number of agents on site has certainly grown: “private security services have a much greater involvement in events than before”⁴⁸. Moreover, as attested in this interview extract, the sweeping of stages may have been an element, if not added, at least generalised after the attacks:

“-MG: Did the police conduct sweepings only from 2015 on?

-GC: Good question, I think we already had it at the time but for more risky events. It was very, very rare. Now it becomes a little more systematic, as soon as we have an event for the general public, there is a visual sweeping with dogs.”⁴⁹

Similarly, medical arrangements such as planning emergency exits and medical stations operated by the Red Cross, and emergency planning as a whole, were very similar in 2014 and 2018.

47 Interview with D. Lambert, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

48 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

49 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

6.3. Generalisation and analysis: securing Brussels festive events economy

Here I attempt to analyse and explain the main evolutions in festive events policing between before and after the 2015-16 terrorist attacks. The aim of this section is to address festive events as a whole, based on observations previously made with the case-studies but also on other events (see the complete list of events used here in annex D). After recapitulating concrete policing measures, I summarise the evolution of events policing under antiterrorism and what it means for Brussels events economy and policy.

6.3.1. Materializing risks prevention & preemption in all festive events

Most of the observations I have made on the BSF can be generalised to other festive events. However, there remain several points of variation depending on several characteristics: whether the entrance is free or not, the type of activities that take place during the event, the number and type of visitors. A first general remark can be made here: a lot more security measures were implemented after the 2015-2016 attacks at festive events. In fact, what was the exception (enclosed festive events such as the BSF because they had a paying entry) became the rule, with several more additional security measures (Agamben 2005; Neocleous 2007a).

“In general, since [November] attacks in France, security measures were strengthened. It started with the Christmas market at the time. [...] From that point on, we always carried out a risk analysis of the event, but we have had more concrete threats, so we took also much more concrete measures in response to this type of threat [...] We didn't wait for the vehicle attacks modus operandi to anticipate them, but it's true that we generalised it to more events, [...] for example, May 1st was not protected in the same way at all. [...] It involves a certain cost to the organiser, it's a fact, but safety comes first.”⁵⁰

a) Enclosures and circulation management

First, as mentioned earlier, if an event entrance was free of entry in 2014, a temporary privatisation of the public space where it took place was not necessary. Accordingly, it was easier to access to the vast majority of festive events in Brussels: they were not circled by fences (except some Nadar barriers on the streets, against traffic) and no searches were conducted. Events in public space were more open, both visually and in terms of access. More generally, several security measures were not implemented, such as conducting sweepings and implementing protections against vehicle attacks. Private security agents were not engaged to insure the security of the event (except maybe for backstage) and less police agents were present.

50 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

As a supplementary example we can look at the FGTT annual “*Fête du Premier Mai*” on square Rouppe, near the South Station. According to the organisers of the event, no Heras fences were installed around the site before the 2015-16 terrorist attacks:

“[Before the attacks], there was no access control, no fences, it was before the Bataclan, we were still in level 2. It's true that since the Bataclan went through this, we've gone to level 3. [...] And sandbags [against vehicle attacks] have been implemented since Nice. Each event brings its share of experiences and reactions adopted.”⁵¹

Since 2016, such techniques have been generalised to nearly all festive events with a big audience. Fencing the site implies that searches will be conducted at its entrance – and vice versa – and that a limited number of entry and exits points (plus emergency exits) will be defined too. These measures are presented to prevent bomb and suicide attacks. However, a lot more objects than weapons are forbidden and these measures are also used to prevent other (possibly more minor) risks: mostly wounds from broken glass, but also people being hurt by full water bottles or other objects (such as umbrellas), and even the risk of recording copyrighted music if it's a concert (cameras and recorders were forbidden at BSF). The terrorist threat enables the organisers to address several other risks that were tolerated in the past.

However searches at the entrance should not take too long: they could create queues outside the perimeter which would be a vulnerable target for terrorists. Thus in most cases, big bags are still forbidden. This is also why marginal changes have been implemented when the alert level was brought down from 3 to 2. Under level 2, searches are not conducted at the entrance of smaller events (which are not privatised either), searches at big events are conducted more randomly, and the police presence intensity has decreased:

“When we were under level 3, there were many more controls, more police officers and most of the events had to be under control. Now for smaller events the police are already less strict on the necessary measures. They continue to make recommendations, to say that we need searches, but in some cases it's visual searches, we don't have to palpate each person, it takes way too much time [...] We were on systematic palpations, it's no longer the case now, we've moved on to random ones depending on the person's behaviour, on how they dress. [...] But it's something, there's little chance of going back until we're sure that the risk of an attack no longer exists.”⁵²

“During this period [level 3], we also increased police presence at events and large gatherings, and so now [under level 2] we may see a decrease in this: an event that takes place in public space, we do not always need a fixed police presence, we can patrol regularly – for example, at a flea market.”⁵³

51 Interview with P.-A. Breeveld, general manager of *Step in Live*, 23/05/2019. *Step in Live* is a private logistics company that has a contract with FGTT-Brussels to organise the logistics and security of *Fête du Premier mai*. Although they outsourced part of the planning process, they managed the general security and logistics planning of the event.

52 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

53 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

In reality, it is quite difficult to give a general description of how strict searches are (were) (both under level 3 and level 2). They range from guards only looking at the bags to thorough frisking and were, as the quotations above testify, less strict after January 2018.

Still, the privatisation and fencing of public spaces during festive events and their access control reflect several dynamics. They resemble closely what is described by Klauser (2013a; 2013b) about “sport mega-events”. Enclosing these events in large fenced perimeters produces security enclaves in the city (Graham 2010). The accesses to these enclaves are controlled with “micro-scale borders” (Franzén 2001), but as Klauser (2013a) describes, a double constraint has to be met: people have to be checked, but this must go quickly. One of the answers to that is categorising people in different types: visitors, VIPs (that have a different entrance) and members of the staff (with several subsections according to the type of staff and the day of work). Another answer is to reduce the intensity of the control (by reducing the search checklist).

Klauser (*ibid.*) also describes how fans’ itineraries (e.g. between the rail station and the stadium) are arranged and controlled. Circulations management can also be found in some kind at Brussels festive events. At the BSF, the foodtrucks and Jersey barriers arrangement drew a ‘natural’ path from one stage to another and highlighted the entrances and the territorial scope of the festival (Figure 4). The crowd was ‘automatically’ drawn to walk along these ways, notably following the rest of the crowd, but also moving through the places where they could buy food and drinks with the festival’s tickets. The foodtrucks were installed on the shortest route from one stage to another, but if one would have wanted to reach Museum square via Museum street, for example (instead of Coudenberg), they could not have done it, since Museum street was blocked. Indeed, another evolution is the fixation of one or multiple “entry points” (where searches will be conducted) for each enclosure: “now the notion of ‘gateway’ to a public place is much more important”⁵⁴. In addition, one of the routes to a nearby metro station was flanked with plastic Jersey barriers (Picture 19). Their primary aim was to prohibit vehicles to park nearby, in order to avoid vehicle explosives and to create a wider pathway for pedestrians. Thus, circulations are channelled – although loosely – through predefined paths that can be controlled if needed (*ibid.*). At smaller festive events though, such as the FGTB “*Fête du Premier Mai*”, circulations were only channelled inside the enclosed perimeter (which comprised Square Rouppe but also three streets that lead to it).

In fact, circulations are especially managed at critical times. For example, when BSF stages have to be closed in order to be cleaned and to be freed of access for the traffic (see p.53), visitors are pushed out by security agents and directed on specific tracks (towards the metro station or the foodtrucks zone).

54 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

These measures seem painstakingly developed and amplified for sport mega-events (see Klauser 2013a). Measures implemented at the BSF are just a mere replication of them, while other, smaller, events in Brussels tend to implement less measures, based on what has been imposed (or recommended) by Brussels police. Still, the enclosure and access control seem to be a minimum. A plausible hypothesis is that the scope of such measures varies according to the scale of the event and the number of people awaited for and thus the risk associated to the event. These spatial measures form the basis for an effective sancutarisation of the event: its protection from threats and disorders can only be achieved through these discipline (enclosures) and security apparatuses (circulations management (Foucault 2007 [1978]; Klauser 2013b).

These practices of surveillance also imply a wide variety of actors (see below and p.39) and materials. Private security agents, privately employed stewards and the police operate in the frontline for access controls and general surveillance, while a network of public and private actors organise the event and its security 'backstage'. On the side of the materials, different sets of fences were used for different types of enclosures, while mobile cameras had been set up at the BSF. Some of them are used by the festival organisation to broadcast live images of the crowd and artists to the crowd. The police also set up mobile cameras in most events in order to watch the crowd and potential crowd movements – if fixed CCTV do no suffice. As Klauser (2013a, p.295) puts it, “these “surveillant assemblages” (Haggerty, Ericson 2000) must be studied as a dynamic and complex whole in order to understand and to problematise the interactions (in consensus and conflict) of different spatialities of surveillance.”

b) Other anti-terrorist fortifications and monitoring

Other terrorist threats are addressed by the following measures that were generalised to most events. First, the eventuality that bombs were placed beforehand on the public premises of the event, is addressed by the police by conducting a sweeping before opening the gates for the public (see p.57). Second, potential vehicle attacks are prevented by putting temporary obstacles on all streets leading to the event. Here again, this measure came into conflict with the necessity for emergency vehicles to access to the event (or buildings that surround it) in case of fire or need for an ambulance, for example.

The 2015 *Plaisirs d'Hiver* were the first event where such obstacles were implemented. This giant Winter Market takes place yearly during nearly one month in multiple streets in Brussels centre, between *Bourse* and *Sainte-Catherine*. Neither in 2014 nor in 2018 was it enclosed with Heras fences but an obstacle was designed, constituted of a concrete block bearing 4 white pine trees (Picture 18)⁵⁵.

⁵⁵ Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

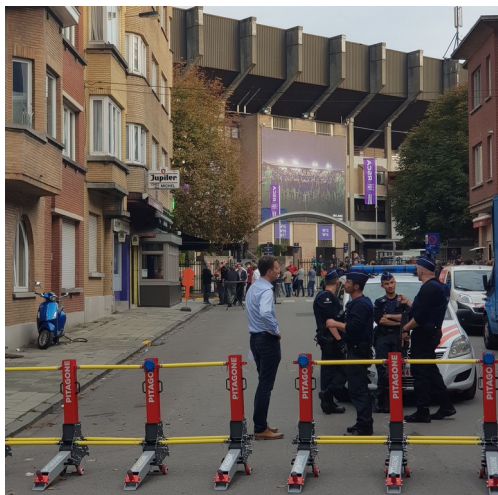
It was the emergency solution that was found in order for the *Plaisirs d'Hiver* to be able to take place in December 2015, right after the Paris attacks (13 November 2015) and Brussels 'lockdown'.



Picture 16: Concrete blocks with pine trees at Plaisirs d'hiver 2016 (La Meuse 2016).



Picture 17: Sandbags at the entry of FGFB's « Fête du 1er mai », avenue de Stalingrad (author, 1/05/2019).



Picture 18: Pitagone crash barriers near Anderlecht football stadium (Pitagone, n.d.).



Picture 19: Protected pathway on rue Royale in 2018, from Palais stage (in the background) to Parc metro station (author, 16/08/2018).

At other festive events, there is no trace of such custom solutions. Obstacles are rather constituted by sandbags (Picture 17), concrete Jersey barriers (Picture 8) or even lighter barriers such as the Pitagone model (but maybe too expensive) (Picture 18). They are put down on each street that leads to the square, outside (and sometimes even inside) the Heras perimeter. Each of these models have different characteristics, such as flexibility and price, meaning that compromises have to be made often. On events I observed in the last year (see list in annex D), the most generalised material was Jersey barriers (e.g. at BSF, see p.49). These barriers are traditionally used to guide traffic on highways, and are thus quite solid in order to resist to a vehicle driving at high speed, which corresponds to a description of vehicle attacks. However this solution is poorly flexible, because it takes time to move those Jersey barriers. It can be therefore very counterproductive in case of any other emergency that would require an ambulance to go on-site, and which would be blocked eventually by the Jersey

barriers. Indeed, the emergency planner for Brussels city explained to me that they warned the security planners:

“We said: “Be careful, it's good to want to protect a site but you have to be able to access it” and so it was adapted [...] by planning default points where firefighters and ambulances can go through to intervene when necessary... At these points, there will be a vehicle that acts as a shield [instead of a Jersey barrier], with a driver who remains on site at all times, to be able to move the vehicle without waiting for an ambulance to arrive.”⁵⁶

This notably influenced police patrols, as related by Brussels police inspectors: “before the attacks there was no need to leave a vehicle, everyone was on patrol on the premises of the event. Now, the only patrols there are those that go from one vehicle to another”⁵⁷. In order for it to be very effective, the vehicle has to be placed side by side with the Heras fences, in front of the emergency exit, aligned on the Jersey barriers, and with an agent permanently on the driver's seat, so he can move the vehicle very quickly (Picture 8). This is the most common alternative (e.g. at BSF, FGTB, Midi fair or small fleamarkets). The vehicle is either owned and operated by the police or the event organiser, depending on the means of these actors and on the result of a negotiation between those actors. At BSF, and probably for most events organised by a public or para-public organisation (such as BME or Brussels Expo), a police van is used. If however, police forces are very much solicited on the day of the event, they will ask the organiser to do it themselves. For example this was the case on 01/05/2019, for the FGTB event on square Rouppe: at the preparation meeting, the police underlined that they would be very busy with many other events that occurred the same day (several protests, the Iris party with a tram parade...) and that they would very much prefer if the FGTB could organise the vehicle themselves. In the end, several vehicles were present near the emergency exit: a police car, an ambulance and a Red Cross ambulance.

Another solution is to place a Jersey barrier on a wooden pallet at the said location, and to have a forklift and a security agent nearby always ready to move the said Jersey barrier if necessary. Of course, the forklift has to be carefully locked in in order not to be stolen. This solution was implemented at the BSF, not for an emergency exit in itself, but in order to block traffic on some streets, except emergency vehicles⁵⁸. It was also implemented for FGTB event on Rouppe square in 2019: all sandbags were placed on wooden pallets and a forklift was ready to be used at strategic accesses.

For both solutions, Jersey barriers are still used on most of the accesses that need to be blocked, except for the few meters next to the emergency exit and which are needed for an ambulance to pass.

⁵⁶ Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

⁵⁷ Interview, 15/04/2019.

⁵⁸ Interview with S. Feldbusch, security coordinator at Brussels Expo, 17/05/2019.

Taken together, the enclosure of events with opaque, covered Heras fences and the vehicle attack barriers constitute temporary fortifications. They enforce “splintering urbanism” (Graham, Marvin 2002; Klauser 2013a), i.e. “the increasing fragmentation of the urban environment into a patchwork of ‘more or less purified insides, separated from more or less dangerous outsides’ (Franzen 2001, p.207)” (Klauser 2013a). Momentarily, during the time of a festival (a few days) or of a party or fleamarket (a few hours), portions of the city’s public space are retrieved from the public realm, into that of the private. There, they are put in order and protected against multiple threats of different nature and intensity: these festive spaces must provide the safest experience as possible (Pradel 2017). This is the essence of the perceptions intended to be provoked by sanctuarisation. This notably poses questions in terms of democratic use of public space and right to the city for the marginalised which are addressed in section 8.

To these measures we can also add potential measures that interviewees did not wish to tell me about and/or that I could not observe. For example, it is possible that for festive events hosting VIPs, snipers would be posted on nearby roofs. Such measures are now common during European summits and protests in the Schuman neighbourhood (Melgaço 2019) and were implemented during London 2012 Olympic Games (Simpson et al. 2017, p. 91). Without knowledge of them, it is difficult to analyse their impact on space and right to the city. Moreover “such features come with political challenges in that their very invisibility means they potentially become an uncontested element of political and public policy” (Coaffee 2017, p. 55).

c) Risk analysis

P. Vanhees, police commissioner in Uccle, explains how the recourse to risk analyses has evolved:

“Before we did our [risk] analysis according to the group that was gathering, and now as soon as we have a large group it is immediately analysed. For example, before the attacks, the Jewish community was at a permanent level 3. So when there was a [Jewish] religious festivity on a square, police officers were put around to protect the crowd. When there were the same number of people but for a non-Jewish event, only stewards were used.”⁵⁹

“A risk assessment can be divided into three steps: (1) identify all assets – human and physical – and their importance; (2) identify threats to these assets; (3) identify vulnerabilities in the organization that could affect the assets. The assessment becomes the foundation for a risk management plan and possibly a plan or physical security” (Simpson et al. 2017, p. 325).

After the attacks, conducting risk analyses has been generalised from events with risky groups to all events. This could be a consequence of considering all events as ‘soft targets’ for terrorists (see p.69), necessitating a ‘target hardening’. London counterterrorist programs of target hardening for public places insist on conducting risk analyses in order to ensure that “protective security measures

⁵⁹ Interview with P. Vanhees, Uccle police commissioner in charge of events, 16/04/2019. It is quite safe to generalise this remark to Brussels police practices in general, since antiterrorist measures concern the whole country.

deployed [are] proportionate to the risk faced. [...] A proportionate approach was deemed necessary in order to minimise disruption to everyday activities and to ‘the ability of individuals and businesses to carry out their normal social, economic and democratic activities’ ” (Coaffee 2017, pp. 53–55). In Brussels, risk analyses are conducted by both the police and security coordinators (see p.39), but recommendations of the police are similar from one festive event to the other: enclosures are systematically enforced. Thus it seems legitimate to doubt that proportionality is a key concern in Brussels.

d) Staff

Fortified spaces of festive events are operated, managed and monitored by a large number of staff. Since the 2015-16 attacks, the number of security agents has increased drastically because of the generalisation of enclosures. As highlighted previously for the BSF (see p.49), several types of agents secure and control sites of festive events.

First, the police. They were already monitoring public events when they were free of access, patrolling around the site. However their presence has been systematised and intensified, and they have to wear bulletproof vests (class 4, more resistant than before) at all times⁶⁰. They are also involved in a higher number of activities: sweeping, intense circulations management (both traffic and pedestrians) when sites’ installations (scenes, fences...) are set up and when people are massively exiting enclosed sites. The latter is named by the police the ‘hospitality system’⁶¹, i.e. mainly the “maintenance of roadblocks and the reorientation if needed of motorists and onlookers” – besides issuing information letters and accreditations (PolBru 2017). In addition to these tasks, police agents also operate access controls and surveillance for some events, organised by Brussels city, such as the New Year’s fireworks⁶² or *Plaisirs d’Hiver*. However, this is rather an exception: most events are organised by para-public or private organisations and the police refuses to perform such tasks for them: “there is no event police in [Brussels] region, so the police are not destined to do access control”⁶³.

This role is rather devolved to private security agents:

“There is a greater involvement of private security services, and the law on private security has been modified: it has been affected by this post-attacks context. [...] Indeed, it [the law] has broadened their [private security services’] legal competences a little bit and it is clear that we need to work with them, because we cannot do it alone. Actually, we’re not an event police force. We are there to guarantee security and maintain public order at rallies, but actually we’re not there to take care of the event.”⁶⁴

60 Interview with Brussels police inspectors, 15/04/2019.

61 Preparation meeting for FGTB “Fête du Premier mai”, 28/03/2019.

62 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

63 *Ibid.*

64 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

In addition to the political one (“it’s not the role of the police”), economic arguments are often mobilised by the police. Besides pointing out that they do not have the right amount of officers to secure an event, they also insist on the fact that if a private organisation makes profit from an event, they should pay the security themselves and not rely on the police for the event’s security. With the generalisation of enclosures, access control and searches have been generalised, and so has the recourse to private security agents. In the past, they would mostly watch backstage entries and frontstage for example at Pride concert⁶⁵, but since 2017 (the law on private security (MB 2017)), they can watch installations and perform searches in temporarily privatised public places. In fact, due to a very quickly growing demand, some interviewees argue that there has been a boom in the number of private security companies since the attacks. This also means that the organisation of a festive event has become far more expensive than before, with high security costs for the organisers. Indeed, in the NMPS framework, the event organiser is put in charge of the security of the event, and has to provide and pay for all security services inside the enclosure.

FESTIVE EVENTS: SYNTHETIC TABLE		
Object	2014	2018
Events are considered soft targets	No	Yes
Risk analysis	Only some events particularly risky	All events
Enclosures with access control by private guards (and stewards), searches and limited number of entry points and emergency exits	Only events with a paying entry	All events
Pedestrians’ circulations management	Only events with a paying entry	All events
Sweeping	Only some events particularly risky	All events
Police surveillance (patrols)	Some	Intensified
Police surveillance (plain clothes)	Only events with a paying entry	All events
Obstacles against vehicle attacks	None	All events
Traffic management	All events	All events
Private security watching the stage (frontstage, backstage...)	All events with a stage	All events with a stage
Health stations	All events	All events
Parades: security ropes around each float	Yes (since 2011)	Yes

Figure 8: Synthesis table of the evolution of security measures for festive events (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

65 Interview with D. Caes, security officer at visit.brussels, 28/03/2019.

Some tasks of access control (e.g. checking the validity of a ticket) are performed by stewards, i.e. defrayed volunteers generally engaged by the company in charge of logistics. Where private security agents had a certified training, are wholly remunerated, and were screened and agreed by the Interior Minister (Jambon 2018), stewards are mostly low-paid young people and students selected by the recruitment company. Still, a general screening of all staff lists is performed by the police before an event, and if someone is in the police blacklist, they would not be allowed to work on that site⁶⁶.

Eventually, all other types of staff: servers, peacekeepers, members of the organizing team, firefighters, members of the emergency medical team. All of them are required to report suspicious behaviour or injuries and to intervene if necessary, as any other citizen. More generally, all the actors mentioned in this section perform tasks of surveillance on these events.

6.3.2. *Crowd control and experience learning*

A number of security measures are also disconnected of the antiterrorist context and are dictated by the need for crowd control. In fact, the terrorist risks are only part of the risks that can occur in a festive event, and not the most probable ones: “as soon as one thinks about the security of an event, one first thinks of the terrorist risk, but there’s much more chance to have a crowd compression”⁶⁷. Some security measures that target the antiterrorist threat are also adapted on the basis of crowd management insights. For example, the measures of circulations management and access controls are *per se* measures to be applied on a crowd. They have notably been set up on the model of football stadiums security⁶⁸. Sometimes, they also require adaptation based on experience learning: during the second edition of “*Fête du Premier Mai*” since the 2016 attacks, “we organised [a] third entry because the two other entries were too congested and we received a lot of complaints that it was not fluid enough”⁶⁹. As pointed out earlier, this critique added to the risk to create a soft target at the exterior of the secured perimeter. Additionally, interviewees claim that they do not practice a pure and simple “copy-paste” of previous editions of the same event to plan security measures⁷⁰: of course, most of the security apparatus remain similar from one edition to the other (in the post-attacks period), but if elements need adaptations, adaptations will be imagined. For example, at the 2019 preparation meeting for “*Fête du Premier Mai*”⁷¹, the logistics planner pointed out how the layout of the enclosure had to be completely reversed to accommodate for a construction site, and the enclosure had to be extended to make room for a new stand the organisers had thought of.

66 Interview with P.-A. Breeveld, general manager of *Step in Live*, 23/05/2019.

67 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

68 Interview with P. Vanhees, Uccle police commissioner in charge of events, 16/04/2019.

69 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGFB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

70 Interview with P.-A. Breeveld, general manager of *Step in Live*, 23/05/2019.

71 28/03/2019.

The first risk associated to crowd is that of stampede, or panic movement, potentially cause for people trampled on. It can be argued that with the generalisation of enclosures with a limited number of entries to nearly all festive events, this risk has been increased. Hence, emergency exits have to be planned, and visible signs have to be put on for the people to know where to go in case of catastrophe⁷². Planning these way out leads to mobilising psychological theories and physical models which assimilate a crowd to a fluid. Therefore circulation management is not only to be found on the fringes of the enclosure (see p.58), but also mostly on the interface in/out, adding techniques, theories and materials to the antiterrorist security assemblages.

Second, risks are also associated in interviewee's discourses to festive parades (notably with vehicles or floats), such as the *Saint-Verhaegen* or the *Pride*. Here, a temporary fixed enclosure is not possible since the event is not on a fixed location. Nevertheless some police (mostly focused on traffic management) and private security staff (focused on guiding the vehicles) are present, but this requires the security coordinator to guarantee that the parade does not extend to much and keeps a slightly constant length. For example, "if someone blocks a float, it means you have to put on top of that more safety measures which were not planned at the beginning, and then [the parade gets longer], so at some point, it jeopardizes the safety of all the parade participants"⁷³.

A second, remarkable measure is implemented since 2012, based on experience learning:

"Brussels experienced a major trauma during a *Saint-Verhaegen* parade a few years ago: a student went under the wheels of a vehicle... Since then the parades have had another security aspect [...] now there I carry out offsite a check of the trucks with the police and fire brigade. [...] And there's the question of how we will prevent the crowd from throwing themselves under the floats."⁷⁴

This question is resolved by mobilizing stewards (volunteers recruited by the event's organiser) to carry ropes in a circle of 2 meters around all vehicles⁷⁵. Hence, participants to the parade are kept at distance from festive floats. These two measures are absolutely measures of circulations management: it is imperative that the parade and the participants stay in lane.

Eventually, another risk linked to crowd control, surveillance and "perturbations" is that of unplanned protests and riots that would occur inside (our even outside) enclosures and parades. A number of recent examples provide material for comparison: protests have notably occurred at 2018 *Plaisirs d'Hiver* and at the last two editions of the *Pride* (see also section 8.2). Enclosures have de facto made it way more difficult to come in an event with non-festive intentions, as testifies also the interdiction of "bad mood" at BSF – along with that of weapons and umbrellas (Picture 1). Hence, pre-emptive measures against terrorism are also effective against protests. On events where

72 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

73 Interview with P.-A. Breeveld, general manager of *Step in Live*, 23/05/2019.

74 *Ibid.*

75 Interview with A. Vandezande, vice-president of Association des Cercles Etudiants (ULB), 18/03/2019.

enclosures are not implemented, such as *Plaisirs d'Hiver* – where Yellow Vests initiated a protest in 2018 – close collaboration with the police reveals very useful:

“We [the BME] are lucky enough to be a non-profit organisation of the city and so we really work hand in hand with the police and it's very pleasant. [...] The *Plaisirs d'Hiver* become, shall we say, a forbidden zone for protesters. And so the police will do everything they can to prevent them from entering the city centre.”⁷⁶

I will look deeper at those issues in sections 7.3 and 8.2. At this point it is sufficient to point out that both police and private security agents will try to forbid protesters from protesting. In the general framework of the NMPS, only the authorised activities by the municipality, carefully planned and approved beforehand, are permitted. The crowd control and antiterrorist measures, in the form of surveillance, enclosures, access control and circulations management, enable security agents to prevent protests as well.

6.3.3. *Antiterrorist framework*

All the measures described in section 6.3.1 were enforced at festive events in Brussels under level 3 right after Paris attacks in November 2015 and Brussels lockdown (e.g. at *Plaisirs d'Hiver*) and after Brussels attacks in March 2016. At those times, Brussels – and Belgium as a whole – was under alert level 3, which was enforced until January 2018 when it was taken down to level 2 by CUTA (see section 3). Since then however, such measures have remained enforced for all festive events. Indeed, the framework remains identical: since the attacks, each festive event is considered by CUTA and the rest of the security actors a “soft target”⁷⁷.

“There's still the terrorist threat even if the CUTA has reduced the level of threat to 2. We're still maintaining the so-called "level 3" measures we were already taking to secure events because a crowd is still considered a "soft target" for terrorist threats. [...] The risk is no longer imminent but it is still likely.”⁷⁸

“We did not change our scheme between level 3 and level 2, because it always seemed consistent with the risk. And for us these levels 2-3 do not mean much, because the risk is always present.”⁷⁹

Despite the marginal changes between level 3 and 2 (see above), festive events are now seen by default as vulnerable targets for terrorist attacks, which is the justification for many of the security measures taken around them. Still, if a precise threat was identified by CUTA for a specific event, they would inform the police and the organisers, which would adapt their risk analysis and the security measures, and debate the possibility of cancelling the event.

⁷⁶ Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

⁷⁷ This is also the denomination used in French.

⁷⁸ Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

⁷⁹ Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

Most of the interviewees in the field of events security have integrated this rhetoric of “soft target” and refer to it quite easily. In the same way, some interviewees also say that “events are still considered under level 3”⁸⁰. As suggested earlier, events are not the only entities that are considered this way. Level 3 is also applied to parts of the territory such as stations⁸¹ and critical targets (Jewish institutions, embassies etc.) while the rest of the territory is under level 2 (and not openly doing so)⁸². Hence this adds up to other antiterrorist measures exposed earlier, further supporting the idea of the emergence of a “new security culture” in the aftermath of the attacks and of the enforcement of a “level 2+” (Campion 2018). Inscribing level 3 and measures that go along for events in the long term (or even *ad infinitum*) can be easily interpreted as lengthening the state of exception, towards a permanent state of exception (Agamben 2005, Neocleous 2007b). Indeed, “while the state of exception was originally conceived as a provisional measure, which was meant to cope with an immediate danger in order to restore the normal situation, the security reasons constitute today a permanent technology of government” (Agamben 2014).

However there was no claim that laws and measures passed in the aftermath of the attacks were temporary. Only the rhetoric of the alert levels called the state of exception. Still it seems to me that it is sufficient to analyse the situation in this way. Measures that were enforced under a temporary programme for festive events were extended indefinitely and antiterrorist laws that were passed in parallel created new categories of citizenship under weak conditions (see Paye 2016).

The cause for considering these events as soft targets was little touched upon during the interviews. To the interviewees, such assertion was self evident and demanded no questioning. Indeed, the attacks that provoked such change in security measures targeted a shopping centre, a football stadium, a concert hall and terraces (in Paris), an airport and a metro station (in Brussels), and later on a public touristic pathway (in Nice) – which are all “crowded places” and are thus considered as ‘soft targets’. This can be explained using Coaffee’s analysis (2017) of the recent evolution of the rhetoric of UK’s security department, the Home Office. Since the 1970s, security managers focused on “defensible space”, i.e. use “planning regulations and advanced technology in order to construct ‘security zones’ [...] where access was restricted and surveillance significantly enhanced” (*ibid.*, p.41). This mostly aimed to protect buildings from the threat of “vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices”, via “target hardening” techniques (i.e. rendering the target more difficult to harm). However, since then, terrorists’ methods have changed, and so have urban terrorist threats, as is shown by the 09/11/2001 (World Trade Centre, New York) and 07/07/2005 (London public

80 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

81 Interview with J.-P. Pistrat, head of the railway police, 05/03/2019.

82 Remarkably, such exceptions are all parts of the territory while events are only temporary occupations of parts of the territory. The dimension of time is added to the geographical one.

transport) attacks. These attacks testify of a change of tactics and target, “increasingly focused on mass-casualty strikes or multiple coordinated attack” (Coaffee 2017), targeting public places.

“These events saw national security policy being rearticulated in terms of the need to respond proactively, and to develop preemptive solutions in order to embed a greater degree of resilience into both physical design of structures and the associated management systems. Traditional emergency planning and counterterrorist strategies were rethought given the increased appreciation of the multiple and fluid threats faced from international terrorism” (*ibid.*, p. 43).

The evolution in Brussels seems similar, though at a less advanced stage. Where in London, security is definitely taken in account in designing the urban environment, especially public space (Coaffee 2017), in Belgium this is still at an early stage, and emergency planners are in demand for such dynamics⁸³. Only bollards set at the entrance of some institutions against vehicle attack (see Picture 20 and Jasinski 2018) match this description of security designs while other designs and with larger scopes are developed in



Picture 20: Example of antiterrorist defensive urbanism against vehicle attacks: bollards in front of Brussels Jewish Museum (BMA 2018)

London. Still, this is interesting to analyse the use of fortifications at festive events, which are only temporary, and the qualification of ‘soft target’. Facing the change in terrorists’ methods, especially after they attacked closer (both in distance and in culture) locations (Paris and Brussels), the police imposed (and later recommended) to take such security measures at events – still in an idea of target hardening. They might also have been influenced by global dynamics in the field of urban security, notably set in UK and USA.

Such new terrorists’ methods on public places have added up to those used in the past in the large list of terrorist threat to protect the city from. These threats are known, and attacks using these methods have already happened, thus protection measures have been developed and implemented. Hence, these are preventive measures, such as those described previously for festive events (e.g. fencing, searches, sweeping, barriers against vehicle attacks). They target precisely-identified threats, which have realised in the past in other places.

However “there’s no such thing as zero-risk”. During each interview on the topic of festive events, there always came a time when the interviewee(s) would say this phrase. “Speaking frankly, today the aim is to limit the damage. Avoiding damage is absolutely impossible”⁸⁴. In other words, no matter how much preventive measures have been set up, the possibility still exists for someone determined

83 Interview with L. Boulanger, PlanU officer, 03/04/2019.

84 Interview with P.-A. Breeveld, general manager of *Step in Live*, 23/05/2019.

to overcome obstacles⁸⁵. Moreover, new attack patterns could occur and not much can be done against that. As Massumi (2007) points out: “we are in a world that has passed from [...] the ‘known unknown’ (uncertainty that can be analysed and identified) to the ‘unknown unknown’ (objective uncertainty)”. Interviewees did not point out pre-emptive measures (that would target the ‘unknown unknown’) to me. Nevertheless, enclosing a festive event and controlling its accesses with searches can also be seen as pre-emptive measures, targeting any other risk than discussed previously. More generally, measures of surveillance notably patrolling, CCTV and de-territorialised command centre are preemption measures as well. Indeed, a commissioner declared that “with the presence of the police, we’re not saying that we’ll be able to prevent the attack [...] but it allows a much faster reaction, directly, as soon as an incident could occur.”⁸⁶ If the attack is not avoided, security actors at least hope to achieve mitigating its effects thanks to surveillance apparatuses and thorough emergency planning.

6.3.4. *Insuring Brussels events economic policy*

The role of these security and discipline apparatuses, besides the monitoring of the events and the people and the management of circulations (which are rather tools), is to reassure. “Secure to reassure” (Garnier 2008, p. 72) investors, users and tourists that Brussels is still a safe city. In fact, “there is a political imperative for demonstrable visible protection to reassure the public that the government are in control” (Coaffee 2017, p.45).

This logic conducted the Belgian government to impose a week’s lockdown of Brussels city in November 2015, and to rapidly take security measures for the events. In the direct aftermath of the lockdown (and by extension of the 2016 attacks), according to W. Hammich, press officer of the mayor, “we faced a political choice: either we turn in on ourselves, or we decide to make sure that the event[s] can take place, that everyone is safe”⁸⁷. Indeed, the 2015 *Plaisirs d’Hiver* took place a few days following the lockdown, with new security measures: obstacles against vehicle attacks and reinforced police presence⁸⁸. In the following months, the next events in public spaces had to be enclosed, etc. The supplementary costs this implied for organisers were partially taken in charge by the municipality, with subsidies that could go up to 17% of those costs⁸⁹ – this is no more the case. Such public investment can be explained by the political vision of the municipality, with at its centre urban entrepreneurialism and urban marketing. According to this vision, urban economic prosperity is determined by urban image and touristic attractiveness in a context of growing international urban competition (Harvey 1989; Pradel 2017). Yet the “challenge” was high: according to W.s Hammich,

85 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

86 Interview with C. Legros, Brussels police commissioner in charge of events, 10/04/2019.

87 Interview with W. Hammich, 27/03/2019.

88 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

89 Interview with W. Hammich, 27/03/2019: “we took in charge 5,000€ of the 30,000€ supplementary costs for organisers”.

Brussels image had been deteriorated by the lockdown and by the fact that the attacks perpetrators came from Molenbeek neighbourhood, portrayed in international media as a “no-go zone”.

Therefore, events had to be well-secured to insure a safe experience and following that, a better image of the city. Users and tourists have to feel safe, and security measures are precisely designed to create such feeling, while not creating too much unease⁹⁰. Generalised security measures (enclosures, access control, surveillance...) create a “normalised apparatus” (Pradel 2017) applied to all events which plays as reassurance. These safe experiences insure the economic success of each single event as well as the whole touristic and events economy, seen as critical in the urban competition. Indeed, “security protects spectators from any perturbation questioning the hedonistic and consumerist communion” (Garnier 2008, p.76).

90 Interview with G. Campé, security coordinator at BME, 19/03/2019.

7. Protests policing

7.1. Case-study 3: Unions' Joined Protest 2018

7.1.1. Context, general organisation and route

The selected protest was organised by the three Belgian unions' delegations in Brussels (FGTB, CSC, CGSLB) on the 02/10/2018. At this period, the right-wing federal government celebrated its 4th year and initiated a neoliberal pensions reform, including the intention to reduce the number of professions to be considered arduous. To show their opposition to the reform, the unions decided not to organise a single national protest in one city, but rather a series of actions in several cities of the country during all day. In Brussels between 4,000 (according to the police) and 7,000 (according to the unions) people marched, demanding the upholding of the pension age at 65 and gender equality in pensions, beyond others (RTBF 2018c; FGTB Bruxelles 2018).

Concretely, the protest was mainly organised by S. Laloux (actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels) which I could interview afterwards⁹¹, in close collaboration with the other unions and under the NMPS rationale (see section 3). After defining internally and with the two other unions concrete details about the protest (which route, what will be organised, which political message, whether there will be animations on the side, the order of the blocks...), the actions coordinator had to declare the protest to the police, as follows:

"We contact the police services, we have a liaison contact person within the Brussels-Ixelles zone, [...] we inform him of our intention, the number of people expected and the type of acts that could be carried out on the site. [...] He knows how we work, our realities, our members, the type of behaviour that can occur, how demonstrations are organised, [...] and it is true that his knowledge of our realities allows him quickly to draw our attention on some aspects."⁹²

"We have a relationship, not a privileged one, but one of trust. So with the police, [...] a good month before the event – that's a good timing – [...] I call [the contact person] to tell him that I'm going to bring in a file [...] So I already test the water, you see? We work closely together [...] and I call the officers with whom I have contacts 3-4 times a day to explain... [...] Then you arrive at a meeting there, and you find yourself in front of all the police forces involved: traffic, trains [and] STIB security, STIB, Red Cross, SNCB, etc. [...] and we discuss the route."⁹³

For unions' protests this is a well-established routine-like process between two stakeholders which know each other quite well. The unions' actions coordinators work together and have direct access to a contact point at Brussels police, member of the general intelligence team. This person's work is focused on unions and political protests: he conducts risk analyses before the protests, establishes the first contacts when a protest demand is filed in, and during the protest he stays nearby the actions

⁹¹ Interview, 22/02/2019.

⁹² Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

⁹³ Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

coordinators (at the front of the parade)⁹⁴. The “trust relationship” between the general intelligence officer and the union actions coordinator has been built over the years and explicitly aims for efficiency in the negotiation & preparation process:

“[N. Philippi] gives us his opinion on our proposal so that we can prepare the more formal meeting. [...] It's informal, it's about feeling how far we can push things and what's not relevant. He's with us from morning to night, he sees things getting ready, [...] he makes us feel comfortable organizing the mobilization...”⁹⁵

After contacting the general intelligence officer, a preparation meeting is organised at the police station, with several police services and the mobility operators (Figure 9). Presided by the general director of operations for protests (Daniel Van Calck), this meeting is where the real negotiation starts and the feedback from the police can vary from time to time. For example, for the protest of the 02/10/2018, the unions' original plan was rejected during the meeting:

94 Interview with N. Philippi, general intelligence officer at Brussels police, 28/03/2019.

95 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

“Mr Philippi told me that he was okay with the idea but at the meeting Mr Van Calck told me: ‘you’ll never be able to do it’. [...] I went alone [to the meeting...] and under the pressure and responsibilities they were putting on us, I chose an alternative route. [...] The next demonstration, my general secretary told me: ‘I’m coming with you, I understand you weren’t comfortable with this stand, but for me we’ll do it in front of the FEB⁹⁶, whether they like it or not’.”⁹⁷

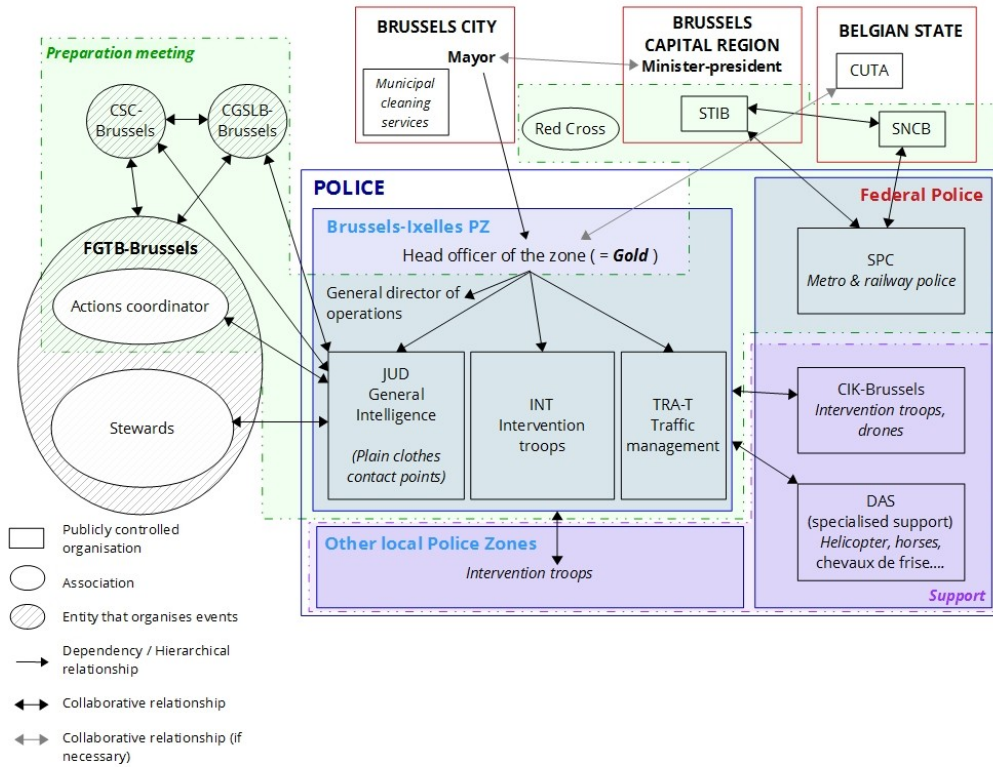
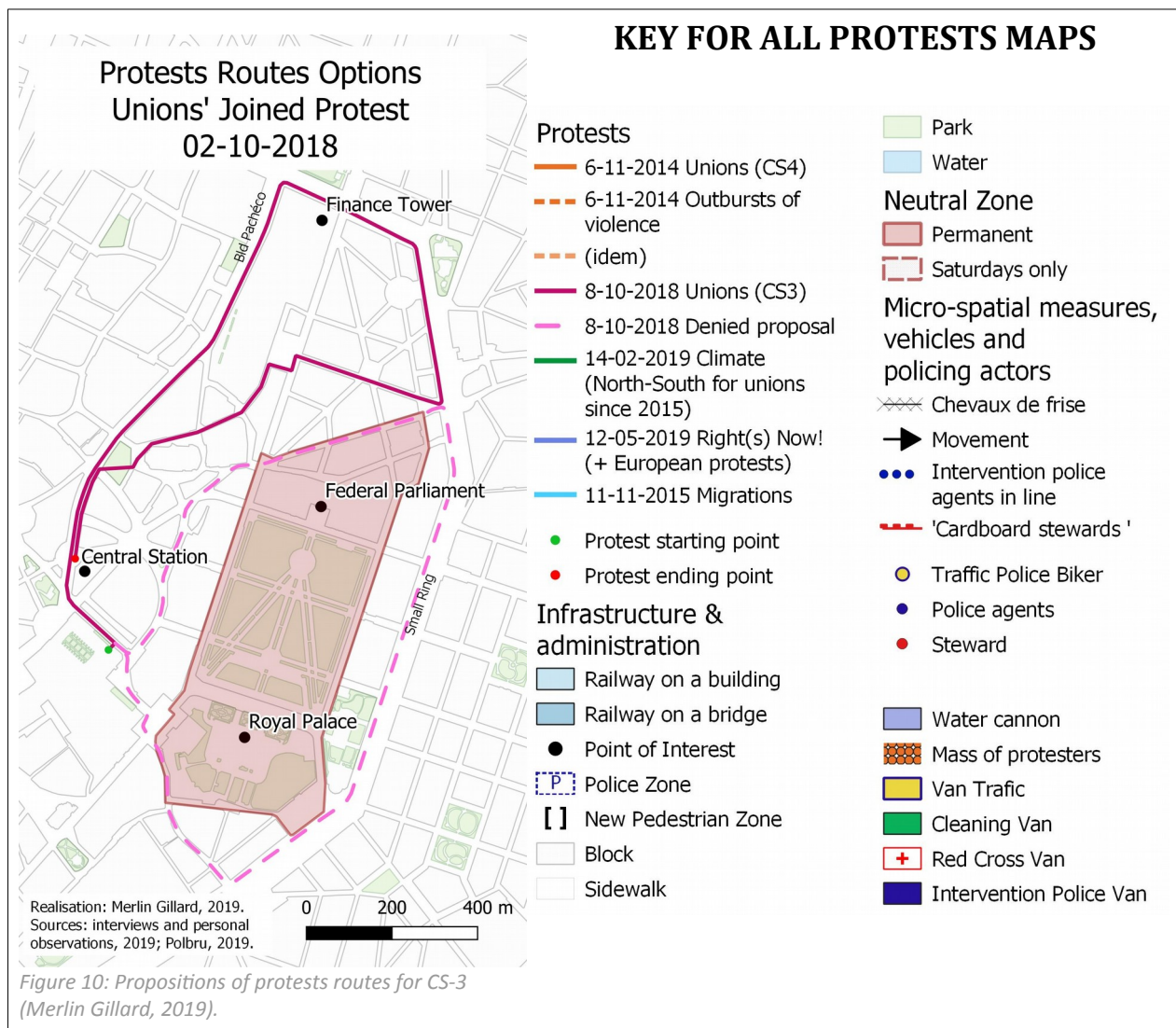


Figure 9: Schematic view of actors involved in the preparation and policing of the protest (M. Gillard, 2019).

96 The next demonstration organised by FGTB-Brussels took place in front of Belgium’s businesses federation (FEB), another symbolic place of power in Brussels.

97 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.



The initial plan was to stand in a circle around the neutral zone (the light pink interrupted line itinerary in Figure 10), to send a strong symbolic message. It was declined by the police for security and mobility reasons – which is a sensible issue in pre-electoral periods, according to Stéphane Laloux: “They told us: ‘In the run-up to the elections, I don’t think the mayor would welcome it if the FGTB blocked Brussels’.”⁹⁸ The plan would have necessitated to block part of the “Small Ring”, the ring road around the city centre, busy during peak hours, for a long time. Supposedly, it would also have been harder for the police to protect all entry points to the neutral zone at once, and they would have preferred to avoid it.

In the end, the demonstration started with speeches on *Mont des Arts* and the chosen route started at central station and traced a loop in the *Notre-Dame-Aux-Neiges* neighbourhood back to the central station (Figure 10). As shows the penultimate quotation, the negotiation with the police requires to be well-prepared and convinced to defend one’s project. As in any negotiation, one has to be prepared to make compromises but also to defend decisive elements. The police, on the other hand, can also make

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

compromises, i.e. arrangements to make sure that the protest can happen peacefully while still enforcing the law. Eventually, a trust relationship is also built between the unions' coordinator and the police general director of operations, and more risky elements can be obtained:

"I have the feeling that a trust relationship has been built over the past few years: a mutual concern to take into account that they are there to do their job (to enforce the law) and that when we meet, their approach is not to annoy us, but to present to us a number of considerations to make things as pleasant as they can be. This trust relationship has also allowed us to go a little further. I think that the action carried out in front of the FEB was possible because over the last 2 years, they saw that we made commitments and that we guaranteed that it would be well prepared, that the demonstrators would be briefed, that the purpose was not to deteriorate but to carry a political message and that it was happening as we had presented it."⁹⁹

The main considerations pointed out by the police during the preparation meeting are issues related to the demonstration route, mobility, and the number of people awaited. The general director of operations makes sure that the mobility agencies (STIB, SNCB) and the railway police (SPC) have planned everything (i.e. enough supplementary trains, enough personnel?) for on one side, the transport of people to the protest departure point and from the protest arrival point; and on the other side, the disagreements caused by the protest, such as a tram line interruption during the time the parade crosses the tram rails. On some critical points, the role of the stewards is debated too (see below): how many stewards should be standing in front of the tunnel entry? The protest route is reviewed carefully (sometimes a plan B is prepared in case less people than predicted come to the protest): using an online satellite map, the route is done virtually, and several critical points are pointed out. Additionally, if animations are planned on the side, the organiser has to detail them and the police can point out details that would need improving from their point of view.

"I organise the meeting [with the event organiser], and I ask the right questions: what do they want to do? We try to find a scenario that satisfies everyone. And then I coordinate the traffic services, intervention, research..."¹⁰⁰

Eventually a short discussion takes place about minority groups that could pose a 'threat to public order', i.e. that could have a more violent behaviour or go beyond the limits set to the official protest. The main questions addressed here are: how could they behave and how could they be managed? Maybe the organiser is already in contact with some of them and agreements not to disturb the protest (too much) have been made. If not, their possible behaviours are detailed and the answers that both the organiser and the police could give them are envisaged. The general intelligence officer also shortly details the minority groups he has spotted on social networks (by looking at events organised that same day)¹⁰¹.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

¹⁰¹ Observations at the "Right(s) Now!" protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019.

After the departure of the organiser, the meeting is prolonged with the police forces only. They recapitulate how much troops of each body (intervention troops, traffic police, general intelligence and railway police) are planned, and how, when and where they will be deployed¹⁰².

As mentioned earlier, the protest route made a loop in the North-Eastern part of Brussels city centre, from and to the central station. This is a rather unusual protest route: most of unions' protests go from North station to South station (sometimes, when concerned with European matters, they also go through the European neighbourhood)¹⁰³.

"The fact that our national 'protest-odrome' is the classic North-South one, used by the biggest demonstrations, is justified by [...] the big advantage that we start from one big train station and arrive at another big train station. Even the central station causes problems because the absorption capacity [of people] and storage capacity of trains is limited, so we try to avoid it."¹⁰⁴

The choice of this itinerary can thus be explained by the low number of people awaited (compared to the biggest demonstrations, see p.87). Here however, the determining factor might be that the itinerary resulted from the negotiation conducted at the preparation meeting: after having denied the proposed route, the police suggested a nearby alternative (see above). For the police, this is way more comfortable: only a few accesses to the neutral zone had to be secured, instead of all of them in the initial project of circling the neutral zone (see Figure 10). In the next section, I notably show how the police fulfilled this role.

7.1.2. *Policing*

Several groups are involved in the policing of an authorised protest such as this one: the unions' internal security as well as several police units.

a) Stewards

First, the internal security (or stewards) organised by the unions on the police's request is charged to supervise and guide the protesters. "Our stewards are here to channel, explain, guide, help, but they're not security guards, [...] they're not here to fight or to join forces against some of the protesters"¹⁰⁵. On the day of the protest, they were positioned at the front, the queue and on the sides of the parade (Picture 21, Picture 22, Picture 23, Picture 24) and they would also stand in line at intersections, indicating the direction to take (Picture 23, Figure 11). At the same time, they ensure that every one knows where to go and where not to go.

102 Sources for the last 3 paragraphs: observations at the "Right(s) Now!" protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019; interviews with C. Zaragoza, B. Deceukelier (CSC actions coordinator), S. Laloux, N. Philippi & D. Van Calck, 2019.

103 Author's observations; interviews with C. Zaragoza & P. Vandersmissen (head commissioner of Brussels police intervention body), 2019.

104 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

105 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.



Picture 21: Front of the 02/10/2018 unions' protest (author's picture, 02/10/2018).



Picture 22: End of the 02/10/2018 unions' protest (author's picture, 02/10/2018).

“It’s the route that determines the number of stewards, we tell ourselves: ‘if we pass by the small ring, to ensure that there’ll be a human chain in the tunnels, we need to plan 10 people per segment, so we make a small calculation according to the layout of the area’. Besides that, we always put 4-5 stewards at the front and at the back of the procession. We predispose them and the idea is that, as soon as the parade has passed, they integrate it. So at each crossroads there’s a new team. That makes quickly a lot of people. [...] We also put people at every intersection with a yellow vest [...] who are more as an indication to tell the crowd ‘take a right turn’.”¹⁰⁶

106 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.



Picture 23: The 02/10/2018 unions' protest crossing an intersection, with stewards on its flanks (author's picture, 02/10/2018).



Picture 24: The 02/10/2018 unions' protest on the small ring, with stewards and traffic police on its flank (author's picture, 02/10/2018).

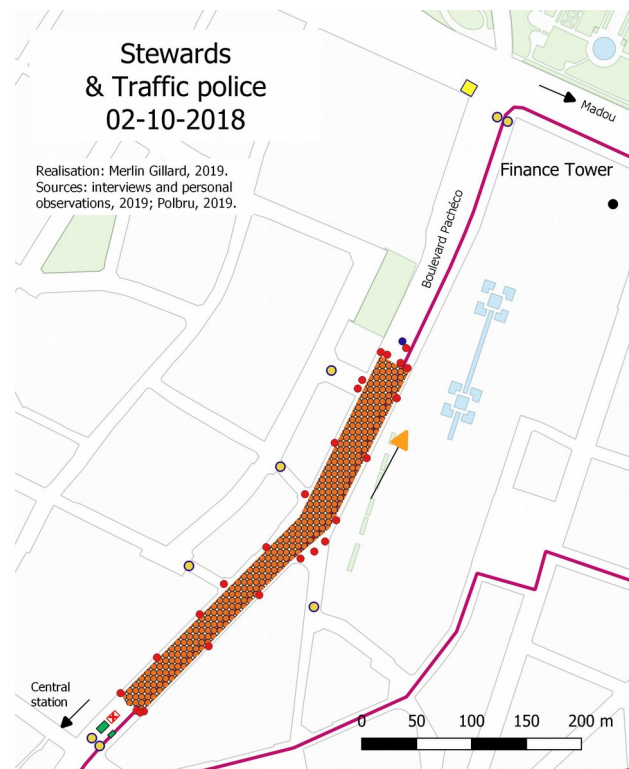


Figure 11: Role & position of stewards and traffic police (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

In addition to this figurative role, they have to answer to any questions participants of the protest would ask them, e.g. on the protest route or the location of the nearest station. Their role also includes a loose surveillance of the protest. If they see or hear from any medical emergency, they need to help the injured, call the Red Cross (which follows the parade with a van) and facilitate the passing of potential emergency vehicles¹⁰⁷. They also need to inform (by phone or instant messaging) their head (usually the actions coordinator) if they see any disorder or riots. In some organisations, stewards also have to inform protesters what they risk if they go off the route and/or start disorders:

¹⁰⁷ Interview with Paul*, CSC steward, 26/04/2019.

“We are told that if we see demonstrators [from our union] who are going to break something, we should tell them: ‘either you get back in line and don't break, or you take off your CSC vest and you break, but you risk being arrested and kept on file’.”¹⁰⁸

Therefore, stewards act as a first, though loose, barrier for any protestor that would like to go out of the designed protest route or create some disorder. However such protestor could soon meet another barrier, the intervention police, situated further away.

b) Intervention police

The intervention police has to protect or defend “critical points” such as the neutral zone or other interest points for the protesters, places of power and/or political representation, e.g. the headquarters of the two main French-speaking parties (MR and PS) or the Federation of Enterprises in Belgium (FEB) etc. They are also charged to maintain protestors on the negotiated itinerary. If they are given the order to do so, they could also arrest protesters. In fact, their tasks range from crowd control to riot control.

Interviewees emphasise that the intervention police works using “sections” and “platoons”¹⁰⁹ which is an exception in the Belgian police but which is very useful for coordinate interventions, according to the interviewees¹¹⁰. This structure is identical in all police zones and thus it is relatively easy to coordinate intervention units that come from different zones. Indeed, intervention policing (especially in Brussels with a high number of events) often mobilises troops from other police zones¹¹¹ (PZ) in support, or from federal units¹¹². Asking for support troops is a routine for Brussels zone, which they do using the system of “hypothecated capacity” (HyCap) in troops that can be sent in such cases to help other PZ¹¹³. This mechanism works best when events are declared and in preparation, but it is also possible to request federal troops as emergency help (Comité P 2018, p. 2). In addition, it is also possible for a zone to ask for specialised material support to DAS: this unit can notably provide water cannons, *chevaux de frise*, a helicopter



Picture 25: Intervention police with *chevaux de frise* blocking the Press street from protesters (the neutral zone is situated in the background) (author's picture, 02/10/2018).

108 *Ibid.*

109 Similarly to the military, these are groups of a fixed number of officers, that finally constitute a hierarchical chain.

110 Interviews with P. Vandersmissen & P. Vanhees, police commissioners, 2019.

111 Since the 1998 police reform, Brussels region is divided in 6 police zones (ZP), each encompassing several municipalities. The one in charge of most events, because they happen in Brussels municipality, is that of Brussels-Capital-Ixelles. It is also the biggest one in terms of troops and has a dedicated intervention corps.

112 Among which the federal intervention corps (CIK) and the specialised support direction of public security (DAS).

113 Interview with L. Pace, CIK deputy operations director, 01/04/2019.

and even a cavalry unit. In Brussels-Capital-Ixelles ZP, a whole unit is dedicated to maintaining order at events: the ‘INT’ unit, counting more than 250 agents, under the authority of commissioner Pierre Vandersmissen. “We are a support service, especially for large events that require a lot of people. We are a kind of reserve at the local level”¹¹⁴.

Concretely, during the 02/10/2018 protest, intervention troops held two types of positions. On the one hand, they were placed on streets leading to the neutral zone, such as in the Press street on Picture 25. They blocked any one, using *chevaux de frise* installed before them. These small fences with barbed wire, inherited from military techniques, forbid anyone to come through easily, unless one has a mattress to put over them (this technique has already been used by protesters). This static position could be described as the defensive position: “from the moment we pull out the *chevaux de frise*, no one comes through any more. When I say no one, it's absolutely no one. And then we must defend our spot”¹¹⁵. A precise target (e.g. the neutral zone) to be protected is identified by the police, which then attempt to harden the target. However they are also legitimised by the head of ‘INT’ with other reasons, nearly assimilating them to tools of pacification:

“The *chevaux de frise* contribute to this concept of negotiated management because they create a distance between protesters and police officers, but we have an advantage: we have a baton that extends our arm by 80 cm. [...] Their purpose is not aggressive: [...] they’re part of the urban landscape and furniture, like the JCDecaux advertising boards. [...] It is true that sometimes they are not removed right away”¹¹⁶.

On the other hand, mobile positions are held by the intervention troops: several units are positioned on both flanks of the protest, one or two streets away, hidden, and move along with the protest, as described by a CIK police officer: “units make leaps as they follow the protest. [...] The advantage is that once the protest has passed these fixed posts, they are reopened and it allows this staff to be reassigned to other tasks, in reserve or as backup”¹¹⁷. “In principle, the order maintenance apparatus is situated at a deep level, [it] follows the demonstration laterally on both sides, and can nevertheless be visible at critical points”¹¹⁸ (Figure 12¹¹⁹). According to the interviewees, in the NMPS framework the police has to remain hidden in order not to provoke protesters. Supposedly, less conflicts, disorders, or riots would happen when applying this low profile: “we assume that, even if it is not our intention, the visibility of the police can be considered by some people as a provocation, an obstacle to being able to express themselves freely”¹²⁰. Still, this does not mean that the police would be ready

114 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

115 Interview with Grégory*, CIK principal inspector, 02/05/2019.

116 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

117 Interview with Grégory*, CIK principal inspector, 02/05/2019.

118 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

119 For demonstration purposes, another protest itinerary is used as an example in this map.

120 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

Figure 12: The 'three layers of policing' around a negotiated protest (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

to leave the protesters on their own – they could go off the negotiated itinerary. In order to prevent and address this risk, such pre-emptive positions are thus held as described by the interviewees. Indeed, apart from some roadblocks on streets leading to the neutral zone, no intervention police agents were visible from the protests.

Additionally, some intervention units are also in reserve and can act as backup if other units need it.

Still, several other police agents, with other roles, are visible. It could be argued that they represent intermediary barriers between the stewards and the intervention police.

c) General intelligence

General intelligence officers are present among the protesters, in plain clothes – but easily recognisable because they wear an earplug. At the observed protest, some were positioned at the head of the protest, next to the unions' actions coordinators (or heads of stewards). Others were also closely following supposedly risk groups, such as a group of anarcho-syndicalists next to which I walked for some time too. In fact, the role of general intelligence officers implies a variety of missions.

They are the first contact for protesters that ask for an authorisation and conduct a risk analysis for the organised protest, attempting to identify risk groups and to establish whether there could be a counter-protest... An hour before the protest, they conduct a general briefing of the stewards, although another one is organised purely internally by the actions' coordinator for their stewards. During the protest, they need to remain in permanent contact with the organiser, so staying with them is quite practical. Thus they lead the protest with the actions' coordinator, indicating the way for the stewards that follow them directly. As mentioned above, other general intelligence officers are dispatched in the protest, nearby "risk groups", to watch them, detect and inform if any disorder would occur: "if some of them start to mask themselves, [the general intelligence officers] will keep an eye on them and share the information with us so that we can eventually act before something happens"¹²¹. When disorder effectively occurs, they are especially helpful by indicating to intervention troops where the hard core group is situated¹²². This helps them to move more efficiently in order to apply the "leap" strategy explained earlier.

"After the demonstration, everything must be documented in a report: 'It went well, such groups were present at the demonstration, there were so many demonstrators, the messages were respected...' 99% of the reports are positive reports [...] If there's something particular to report, it'll be written in this report, which finally goes into a general database, where we see that such organization did such demonstration(s) at that time, with such circumstances and findings that something [disorder] happened or not."¹²³

121 Interview with Brussels police inspectors, 15/04/2019.

122 Interview with Grégory*, CIK principal inspector, 02/05/2019.

123 Interview with N. Philippi, general intelligence officer at Brussels police, 28/03/2019.

The role of the general intelligence officers is thus a comprehensive one and has two main sides: first searching, collecting and communicating critical informations; and second acting as the privileged contact point for protesters and building the trust relationship with them, which is necessary in the negotiated management framework.

d) Traffic police

Eventually, the most visible police unit – and maybe the first to be seen by protesters – is the traffic police. This is indeed reflected in my field notes, taken before conducting interviews and thoroughly understanding the role of other police units: “the task of the police seemed to be mainly diverting the traffic to ensure that it was possible for the demonstration to happen securely”¹²⁴. Traffic police agents wear orange clothing and mainly use motorbikes and vans. Their main task is to secure the negotiated itinerary by blocking or diverting traffic to other streets (Picture 25, Picture 26, Picture 27 and Picture 28).



Picture 27: Traffic police on bike securing the protest's itinerary and deviating vehicles (author's picture, 02/10/2018).



Picture 26: Traffic police with bikes and a van anticipating the protest and deviating vehicles (author's picture, 02/10/2018).



Picture 28: Traffic police securing the protest's itinerary and deviating vehicles (author's picture, 02/10/2018).

¹²⁴ Field notes excerpt, 02/10/2018.

“Police agents position themselves at particular intersections to divert traffic – this is what we call Hospitality – and then there is the traffic department, the mopeds that will cut the streets ahead, behind them...”¹²⁵ Their task is not to prohibit protesters from going off route, and this is reflected in the feeling expressed by P. Vandersmissen: “the traffic [police] is well accepted in Belgium: even the demonstrators know that they’re here to prevent cars from driving inside the demonstration”¹²⁶.

7.2. *Case-study 4: Unions’ Joined Protest 2014*

As for case-study 2 (see p. 54), the following description draws on press and blog reports, interviews and especially pictures from social networks, collected or taken directly by L. Melgaço in 2014, and pictures taken by agencies (e.g. Krasnyi collective).

7.2.1. *Context, general organisation and route*

Multiple differences between the two editions can be pointed out: the November 2014 protest gathered between 100,000 and 120,000 people (RTBF 2014b), which is approximately 20 times more than at the October 2018 studied previously (see p. 74). This number had not been attained since 15 years in Belgium (*ibid.*). It can maybe be explained by the political context: in 2014, this was one of the first protests against the politics of the newly elected right-wing federal government. This federal government included the separatist party N-VA and only one French-speaking party, the liberal one (MR). The government agreement included many austerity and anti-social measures, against which unions and parts of the population were decided to show their opposition and to fight against them (M. Goblet, FGTB, quoted by RTBF 2014b). Supposedly, this induced many groups to come to the protest and to mobilise many people to protest. Moreover, it was a national demonstration rather than a single ‘action’ among others in the country as in 2018.

The itinerary of the demonstration was different as well: in 2014, it went from the North station to the South station, while in 2018 it made a loop from and to the Central station (which was rather an exception and was not reiterated afterwards). The “North-South itinerary” can be considered a classic, well-known itinerary, although its routing has recently changed, particularly because of the new pedestrian zone. Eventually, the November 2014 protest is well-known for the riot-like character it took at its end, while the October 2018 protest was much more peaceful. These elements will be discussed more thoroughly in a later stage (see section 7.3) but one must be conscious of them when comparing the two protests. Despite these differences, I still consider it relevant to conduct such comparison, because it could reveal useful in highlighting the multi-factorial differences in the protest policing in Brussels.

125 Interview with N. Philippi, general intelligence officer at Brussels police, 28/03/2019.

126 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

Although the Negotiated Management of Public Space (NMPS) has been “operationalised” in 2014 with the minister circular OOP41, it was already applied sooner in Brussels, even since the start of the 1990s according to some interviewees¹²⁷. Thus, this protest was organised under this framework, similarly to the 2018 protest (see above). Unions coordinators were in contact with general intelligence officers and they participated in a thorough preparation meeting with the police. Policing techniques were similar too, although the intervention police did intervene a lot on 06/11/2014 – oppositely to the completely peaceful 2018 protest.

The main parade went through the centre boulevards (Jacqmain, Anspach, and Lemonnier boulevards, see Figure 13) and some animations were organised by the unions on the side of the itinerary. It was supposed to stop at South station, with speeches by the unions’ presidents. However, several protesters decided to continue marching on Midi boulevard, i.e. the small ring, towards *porte de Hal* (dotted line on Figure 13) (Marchal, Bensalem 2014). According to mainstream press, cobblestones and sign posts were thrown at the police and cars were set on fire. On the other side, the police harshly replicated (see below). It can also be noted that the repression extended in the judiciary field: several activists were condemned, using images taken by general intelligence officers and CCTV (Secours Rouge 2015). Another action (symbolic) was conducted at the FEB headquarters: 150 young activists occupied their offices during a few hours (Marchal, Bensalem 2014; RTBF 2014b).

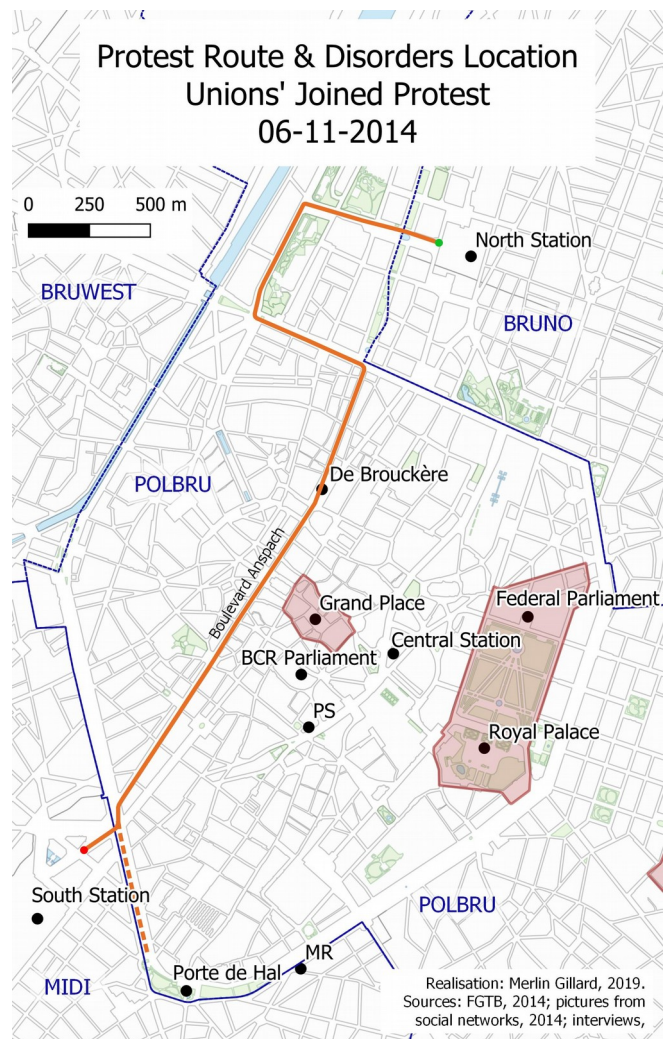


Figure 13: Itinerary of the 06/11/2014 protest (CS4), and the place of the disorders (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

7.2.2. Policing

Similarly to case-study 3, I detail here the policing apparatuses from the available sources. Again, systems that are completely identical are not described in detail as they were already explained when

127 Interviews with P. Vandersmissen, D. Van Calck and B. Deceukelier (CSC actions coordinator), 2019.

looking at case-study 3. The focus is still on the policing methods and I do not explain at length the protesters' behaviours.

a) Stewards

Only a few stewards – wearing yellow vests – are visible on the selected pictures (Picture 29, Picture 30, Picture 31 and Picture 32). Moreover, they did not seem to be posted on the edges of the route in order to channel the protesters, excepted at some intersections (e.g. at the intersection between Jardin Botanique and Jacqumain boulevards, see Picture 29). Most stewards can be seen in front of their block¹²⁸, opening the route – but not all blocks had stewards. Notably, the first block of the protest was led by the unions' presidents and general secretaries, holding a wide banner made by the three unions ("Stop to injustice!"). At some times, a rope was held by stewards in front of that banner, supposedly to enable photographers to have enough room to take a nice picture of the banner with the unions' big names united behind it (Picture 33, Picture 35). In the rest of the demonstration, most stewards were marching with the crowd, either holding a banner and leading their block, or mingled with other protesters, rather than standing at fixed postings. One can assume that the protesters simply followed the lead of the march in order to know where to go (though the itinerary was a classic), although there were up to 120,000 people at this march, which was for some of them their first protest (M.-H. Ska, CSC, quoted by RTBF 2014b). Some protesters might also have gone off-route in some places, e.g. Antwerp dockers in the small streets of the Marolles neighbourhood (Picture 34).

Moreover, little attention was paid to security around vehicles. Some vehicles or floats were allowed in the parade (Picture 32), notably to carry animations or installations around. No stewards were walking next to them carrying a rope around them, contrary to what has been imposed to festive parades (see p.68). According to C. Zaragoza¹²⁹, vehicles have been forbidden in protests since the 2011 *Saint-Verhaegen* accident and this protest might have been an exception or unions might have taken the liberty to include some vehicles in the parade. In general, exceptions can be made if vehicles are situated at the head or the end of the protest¹³⁰. It was not possible to establish since when this was obligation was imposed for parades. However, in 2018 vehicles were actually forbidden in protests.

128 A block in such a protest could be defined as a specific group of protesters. Typically, sub-sections of unions (e.g. public services, young unionists...) but also other organisations or groups (e.g. from political parties, to the illegals movement) can form blocks.

129 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

130 Observations at the "Right(s) Now!" protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019.



Picture 29: Bottom left of the picture, stewards orient the protesters on the negotiated itinerary at the intersection between Jardin Botanique and Jacqumain boulevards. (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 30: The 6/11/2014 protest on Pl. Anneessens. (Unknown author(s), Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 31: The 6/11/2014 protest on bld Anspach. (Unknown author(s), Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 32: The 6/11/2014 protest on bld Anspach. More stewards are present next to the head banner of the protest (Unknown author(s), Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 33: Front banner held by unions' presidents, general secretaries etc. A rope can be seen in front of them, held by stewards (although it was not always here). (Author : L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 35: Front banner held by unions' presidents, general secretaries etc. A rope can be seen in front of them, held by stewards (although it was not always here). (Author : L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 34: Protesters (dockers from Antwerp) in Brussels small streets. (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 36: Float during the 6/11/2014 protest. No stewards are securing it. (Author : L. Melgaço, 2014.)

b) Traffic police, mobility management and general intelligence

Traffic police are not visible either on the pictures. For a protest this big, one can assume without a lot of doubt that they were present. The same observations can be made concerning general intelligence officers.

However Picture 37, taken near Bourse, shows how traffic was prevented from penetrating the protest itinerary without traffic police: Nadar barriers were installed to cover the whole width of the street and block vehicles. The Red Cross van on the picture might be an exception – or rather, Red Cross vans could have been planned regularly at selected postings. Other mobility measures include forbidding the parking of vehicles on the itinerary (this was done in 2018 too) and parallel streets. Additionally, special spots on the streets were dedicated to coaches, in order for them to drop and take back the protesters they drove to/from the protest from/back to their home city (Marchal, Bensalem 2014).

c) Intervention police

Unlike for the 2018 protest, the work of the intervention police was not limited to defensive positions and pre-emptive measures. Still, they defended critical points such as the neutral zone, but also the MR headquarters (Picture 39), situated after *porte de Hal* when coming from the South station on the small ring.

Indeed, the intervention police also intervened offensively: they repressed the protesters that continued marching on the small ring after having passed the South station, i.e. the negotiated destination of the protest itinerary. According to mainstream media (and partially confirmed by pictures), such protesters were notably composed of Antwerp dockers, anarchists and “troublemakers” – but it can be assumed that many other people which would not define as such would have participated too, notably according to the pictures collected – and were at least two hundred (Marchal, Bensalem 2014; RTBF 2014b). It was also pointed out that racists acts were conducted and that “provocative agents” had induced the disorders. This was denied by an anarchist collective, also pointing out that the racist acts of some people could not lead to the assimilation of the whole movement as a fascist one (AL Bruxelles 2014).

In order to counter these protesters seen as illegitimate because they went out of the negotiated itinerary (see below), the police conducted offensive tactics attempting to push the protesters back to the itinerary. According to L. Pace, CIK deputy operations director, “reactive tactics [include]: push back, disperse and confine”¹³¹. Pushing back protesters can lead to either a dispersion (ensuring protesters split and go away in different directions to prevent them from gathering again) or a confinement (gathering the protesters in a place, circled by police agents, to ensure they stay at that

¹³¹ Interview, 01/04/2019.



Picture 37: Roadblock near Bourse with Nadar barriers and a Red Cross vehicle (Author : L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 39: Police agents in front of the MR headquarters (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 38: Water cannon, police troops, police helicopter and protesters near porte de Hal (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 40: Protesters fleeing the water cannon (in action under the "south station tunnel"). (© Krasnyi collective, 2014.)



Picture 41: Police troops moving forward with a water cannon (firing water) (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 42: Police troops moving forward with a water cannon (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 43: Police troops charging (running) with a water cannon (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)

place, stop protesting and eventually take their identities and even arrest them ‘administratively’¹³². This is sometimes called ‘kettling’¹³³ by protesters and observers). Sometimes no such action is conducted after protesters have been pushed back, and this is what happened in this case. The pushing back in itself supposedly started near *porte de Hal* (Picture 38). It involved agents in “full protection”¹³⁴, i.e. equipped with a fireproof vest, a helmet and shin guards, and carrying a baton and a round shield. They were forming a line in front of a water cannon and marching onto the protesters (Picture 38, Picture 41, Picture 43 etc.). Water cannons are equipped with lights, cameras, and a speaker, and can shoot during maximum 4 minutes at a maximum range of 65 meters (Ziegler 2019). The aim of the water cannons is to push back protesters by wetting them and by using the strength of the water jet, although it can also cause eye injuries¹³⁵. The helicopter seen on Picture 38 enables the police to have a global view of the situation and to see where protesters head to. It is also used preventively in many other protests: do protesters remain on the negotiated itinerary or not? Based on the pictures collected on social media, we can see the progression of the police forces from *porte de Hal* (Picture 38) until the South station tunnel (Picture 40), advancing using the water cannons – that often had to be replaced due to the long time necessary to fill up their tanks again – and the slow or rapid charges of the agents on foot (Picture 41 to Picture 44). The line they formed in front of the water cannons – a classic offensive tactical scheme – was often broken due to ‘neutral’ obstacles on the way (street furniture, trees, parked cars...) or those that the protesters tried to put up (large bins, tilted cars, fences...). To help them in their charges, when the action of the water cannon was not sufficient, and

132 An administrative arrest can last for 12 hours (or 48 hours if the person does not have a residence permit) and is not registered in the person’s criminal record.

133 In French, protesters talk of ‘*nasses*’.

134 This is the term also used in French. Interview with Thomas*, CIK inspector, 02/05/2019.

135 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.



Picture 44: Police troops charging with a water cannon in action (Unknown author (supposedly Russia Today), Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)



Picture 45: Use of gas against the protesters. MediActivista, 2014.



Picture 46: Use of batons against the protesters. MediActivista, 2014.



Picture 47: Police arresting protesters. (Unknown author (supposedly Russia Today), Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)

when they felt endangered and/or felt too much resistance from the protesters, police agents also used tear gas and even their batons to push back determined protesters (Picture 45, Picture 46).

As a result, a hundred police agents (ObsPol 2014) were hurt, mostly by protesters throwing stones or other material. It should also not be excluded that police agents were hurt by the action of their colleagues: water cannons have already injured police troops¹³⁶. Protesters and observers were hurt by the police too, victims at multiple times of police violence, and arrested (Picture 47). The Red Cross has conducted more than 35 “interventions” (RTBF 2014b) but it is plausible that there were a lot more injured people. Notably, a photographer and an observer were hit with a baton – the observer passed out (ObsPol 2014). Of course, these practices were not formally nor explicitly mentioned by interviewees, yet they constitute tactics that will be analysed on p. 105.

Following this protest, police agents declared in the press that backup they asked for came very late (RTBF 2014c), supposedly hindering their capacity to better handle the disorders. Later on, an internal police report (that I was given the opportunity to read) pointed out the poor synchronisation of police zones, both during the operations (i.e. the protest monitoring and repression) and before when writing the operations plan. No preparatory meetings had been organised with all the units’ heads beforehand. According to the author, while the general “intervention philosophy” of negotiated management was enforced perfectly well, notably by applying “the repressive approach of negotiated management, i.e. maintaining and restoring public order” (p.33), the equipment could be improved¹³⁷.

7.3. Generalisation and analysis: behind negotiated protests?

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ Teirlinck J., 2014, *Lessons Learned – Analyse a posteriori, réflexions et propositions d’améliorations*, Brussels-Capital-Ixelles ZP, 28/11/2014.

In this section, I draw on the observations made earlier for protests in order to discuss the recent evolution of protests policing in Brussels. Several other protests than the case studies, studied using the same methodology (ethnographies, interviews and press and blog articles), are also discussed here in order to support and enrich the analysis.

Although the tasks of the intervention police during the two case-studies were quite different, the global policing framework and philosophy was the same. Only marginal changes concerning for example protests routes or the presence or not of vehicles in the parade, have been noticed. However, the net change between 2014 and 2018 might not reflect all the evolutions that occurred during that period; such evolutions will be addressed here too. In the following sections, I point out and analyse both the constant characteristics of protests policing and its evolutions in Brussels, in accordance with the research questions. First, I focus on the analysis of NMPS, starting with its application for authorised protests and then on the choice of policing for any protest in general. Eventually, I analyse the evolutions of protest policing.

7.3.1. The routine of authorised protests policing

The negotiated management of public space (NMPS) rationale has been enforced since at least the last twenty years in Brussels. Its central feature is the negotiation between the police and protests' organisers, which sets the global framework for protests and can lead to some evolutions in the spatial characteristics of protests. These are addressed in the following subsections.

a) Preparation meetings, negotiation and trust building

Brussels-Capital-Ixelles police has counted 995 protests ("claiming events", authorised or not) in 2018, slightly more than the previous year (913, + 9 %) ¹³⁸. Supposedly, most of them were declared and authorised, but preparation meetings were held only for the biggest of them – preparation is often done by phone too ¹³⁹. When a meeting is organised, it is used to thoroughly review the protest route with the organiser and conduct final negotiations. The situation of case-study 3 (see p.76) where the first route was completely rejected by the police is quite unusual: usually the general plan proposed by the organisers is accepted and only minor remarks are made by the police general director of operations, or other actors present at the meeting. Hence, the police can learn about the intentions of the organiser and moderate them if necessary. For example, at the preparation meeting for the "Right(s) Now!" protest (claiming climatic and social justice), the police asked to know about the animations that would be organised on the side of the protest: what/where/how will such animations happen? It helps them to anticipate the risks created by those animations and suggest

¹³⁸ Document given by W. Hammich, press officer of Brussels mayor: Brussels Police, *L'année 2018 en sécurisation d'événements*.

¹³⁹ Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

modifications, based on concerns about crowd control, mobility or potential disorders¹⁴⁰. Police (which organise and dominate the meeting) aim to prevent stampede, as much traffic and public transport disturbances as possible, and disorders from risks groups. In this regard their remarks take the form of strong suggestions, which are debated with the organiser and mobility operators. Some arguments are made very firmly by the police, yet they also give the impression that they do not impose anything, by adding formulas such as “it’s your choice” or “it’s just our advice”:

“They put us under a lot of pressure, they make us face our responsibilities, to ensure that there won’t be any degradations... You feel that they are not comfortable with the proposal, but they never strongly oppose the proposal. ‘You can do it, but you’re aware of the risks you’re taking’. [...] Or we’re told: ‘if you could handle these elements, that would be very nice’.”¹⁴¹

This fits in the NMPS strategy which implies making the organiser responsible or accountable for their event and the risks linked to it (indifferently for festive events or protests). This is best explained in this note of a police officer explaining the NMPS:

“As the initiator of an event, the organiser has an important responsibility in terms of security. He is supposed to behave responsibly during the preparation, the organisation and the monitoring of the event [...] He has to be stimulated in order to behave as a reliable partner, respectful of the laws and the rules and to actively work with the authorities and charge and the police. [...] He ensures that the event does not have a negative impact on everyday life, social and economic life or, at the very least, that this impact remains within acceptable limits” (Teirlinck 2016, p.8, my translation).

Making the organiser responsible thus intends to make sure that they share some of the police objectives: that the protest happens peacefully, that there will be no disorders, that no one or no public or private property will be hurt... In this sense, it participates in the pacification both of the protest and of the relations protesters – police: “[negotiating] creates a climate of trust : it makes protesters responsible, the organisers tell their protesters ‘we’re negotiating’... So the tension goes down, it’s not a protesters versus police thing”¹⁴². Such observations are notably similar to that of Della Porta et al. in 1998 France (1998, pp. 114–119). However this is not applied for all protests, as I will show below (see section 7.3.2).

Building trust relationships (see pp.74-79) through iterate negotiation process (as in the case of unions, which periodically organise protests) can also lead to more in-depth “successful collaboration” between protests organisers and the police. This can be seen in the organisation of unions’ protest on the North-South itinerary: disorders kept happening at the end of the route in the

140 Observations at the "Right(s) Now!" protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019; interviews with C. Zaragoza & S. Laloux, 2019.

141 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

142 Interview with W. Hammich, press officer of the mayor, 27/03/2019.

years following the 6/11/2014 protest¹⁴³, which was problematic both for unions and the police. The FGTB actions coordinator had the idea to implement a slightly flexible barrier in the middle of the small ring, where the protest was supposed to stop (Figure 14):

“It was an idea that came to me: under the bridge of the south station, we installed cardboard panels, [...] creating a wall of ‘cardboard stewards’ to avoid giving visibility to the possibility of continuing the route [towards *porte de Hal*]. [...] That thing worked well, because we didn't have any more confrontations: Mr Van Calck is still asking for it today. [...] He likes the idea a lot, because as a rule he doesn't like confrontations.”¹⁴⁴

“Panels are hooked on a big rope which is held tight [between the bridge pillars], and it requires people to hold them from time to time [...] I think that after the incidents on *Boulevard du Midi*, [the police discussed] with the unions to see how we could channel the end of the parade and avoid confrontations at this place. The panels must be part of the solution [...] and with my logistical perspective, I see it as a guarantee of the smooth running of the event. [But] we had a lot of resistance internally, some people refused to put up their signs, feeling that it wasn't their job and that we were the police's alibi to hide their vehicles.”¹⁴⁵

Indeed, the police are quite satisfied with such system:

“On their own initiative, Zaragoza and his boss invented the idea of placing cardboard stewards. Of course, they're never going to stop anyone. But for the normal demonstrator, the limit is there. It also means, for the unions: you are protected by our organization until then. If you go further, it is your responsibility. So it's very well thought out, it works very well. [...] Frankly, it's a very good example of working with them.”¹⁴⁶

“It is a physical obstacle that can be overcome, and it is not the role of the union to defend a position either. [...] The police are not [posted] just behind the signs, but higher up [towards *porte de Hal*...] [The aim is] to prevent them [protesters] from going to *Toison d'Or* [avenue], to the MR [headquarters], or [further on] to the neutral zone. And above all, it is not what is negotiated.”¹⁴⁷

If however, more radical protesters wish to go through, the idea is that they would not be followed by more peaceful ones, and thus “negative solidarity” would be avoided¹⁴⁸. This helps the police by decreasing the number of people that go off route (or stopping them), and by filtering the “good” protestor from the “bad” protester, which could potentially be arrested and identified later on (see section 7.3.2).

143 Disorders occurred when similar protests were organised in 2015 (La Dernière Heure 2015b) and 2016 (RTBF 2016a).

144 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

145 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

146 Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

147 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

148 Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

Since this system is applied (supposedly after the last demonstration in 2016), no more confrontations happened at this place at the end of a unions' protest (see for example in 2017: *Le Soir* 2017). Although I could not witness it, this system seems more efficient to materialise the protest's borders than simple stewards and Nadar barriers as were put at the 6/11/2014 protest (Picture 48). It also helps the police enforce their de-escalation rationale: with this system, even the traffic police is not visible.

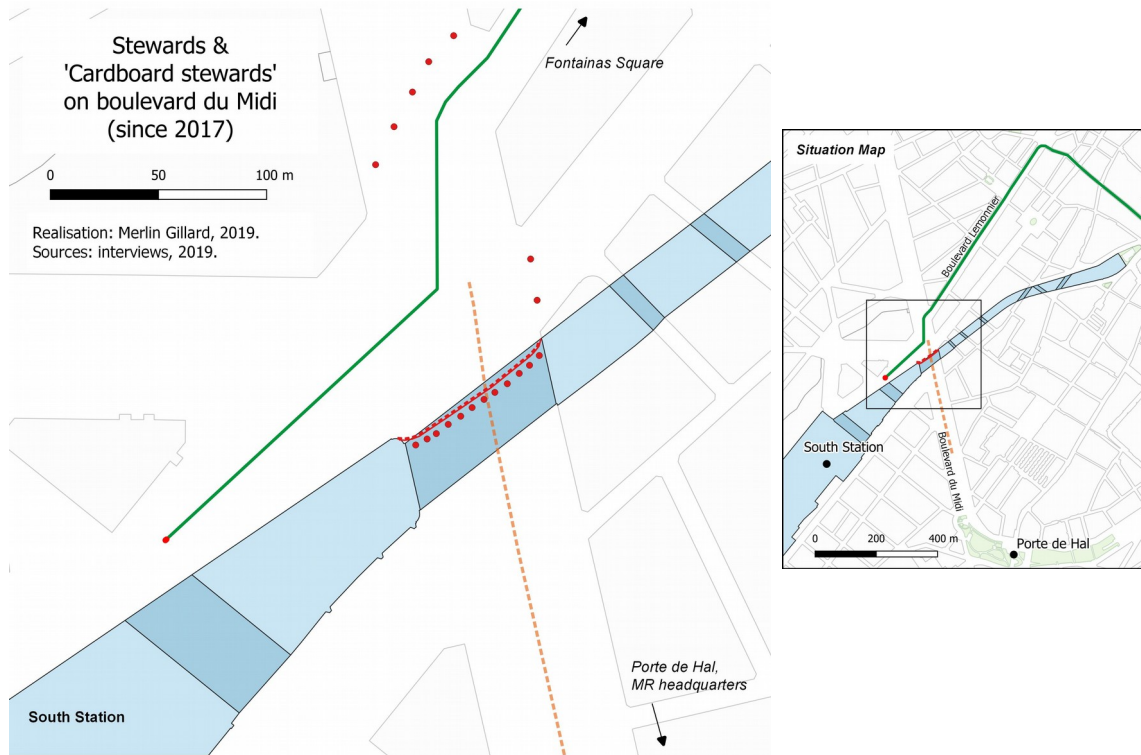


Figure 14: 'Cardboard stewards' under the railway bridge on boulevard du Midi (Merlin Gillard, 2019).



Picture 48: Nadar-like barriers on the Midi boulevard, opened by protesters to continue marching towards Porte de Hal. In the background, an intervention police unit is marching. (Unknown author, Twitter pictures collection by L. Melgaço, 2014.)

Despite this co-management of the protest, the police and the “administrative authority” (i.e. the mayor who commands the police for protest policing matters) still have the monopoly of force and the last word when it comes to decisions. This can notably be seen in how protest routes are chosen.

b) Licensed protest routes and prohibited zones

Protest routes (Figure 15) are determined by several constraints: law and local rulings, crowd management, interest of the protesters, and urban design. Although this subject would require a thorough study of its own, some tendencies and changes can still be pointed out here.

The first constraint is the legal one: the federal law forbids protests in two areas, called ‘neutral zones’, which encompass places of power: for example the Royal Palace, the Prime Minister’s office, the federal Parliament, the European Parliament, etc. As pointed out earlier (see section 3.2), the reason for this is to ensure that constitutional powers and legislative work are not disturbed. For political debate to happen, it should not suffer from the pressure of the street, seen as partial. In fact, Pitseys argues that such neutral zones rather aim to shelter legislative work from political, social and communitarian conflicts, expressed in the form of protests (2012). This legal interdiction leads the police to express an absolute ‘no’ to any protests that would occur in the neutral zone: “we cannot authorise, we cannot even tolerate a protest in the neutral zone, it’s a law, we don’t have the choice”^{149,150}. Still, and maybe because of that interdiction, this is often a place that attracts protesters, and that will be harshly defended by the police (Keunings 2002).

¹⁴⁹ Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

¹⁵⁰ Still, a protest in favour of a “climate law” could occur in the neutral zone recently, on 24/03/2019 (see below).

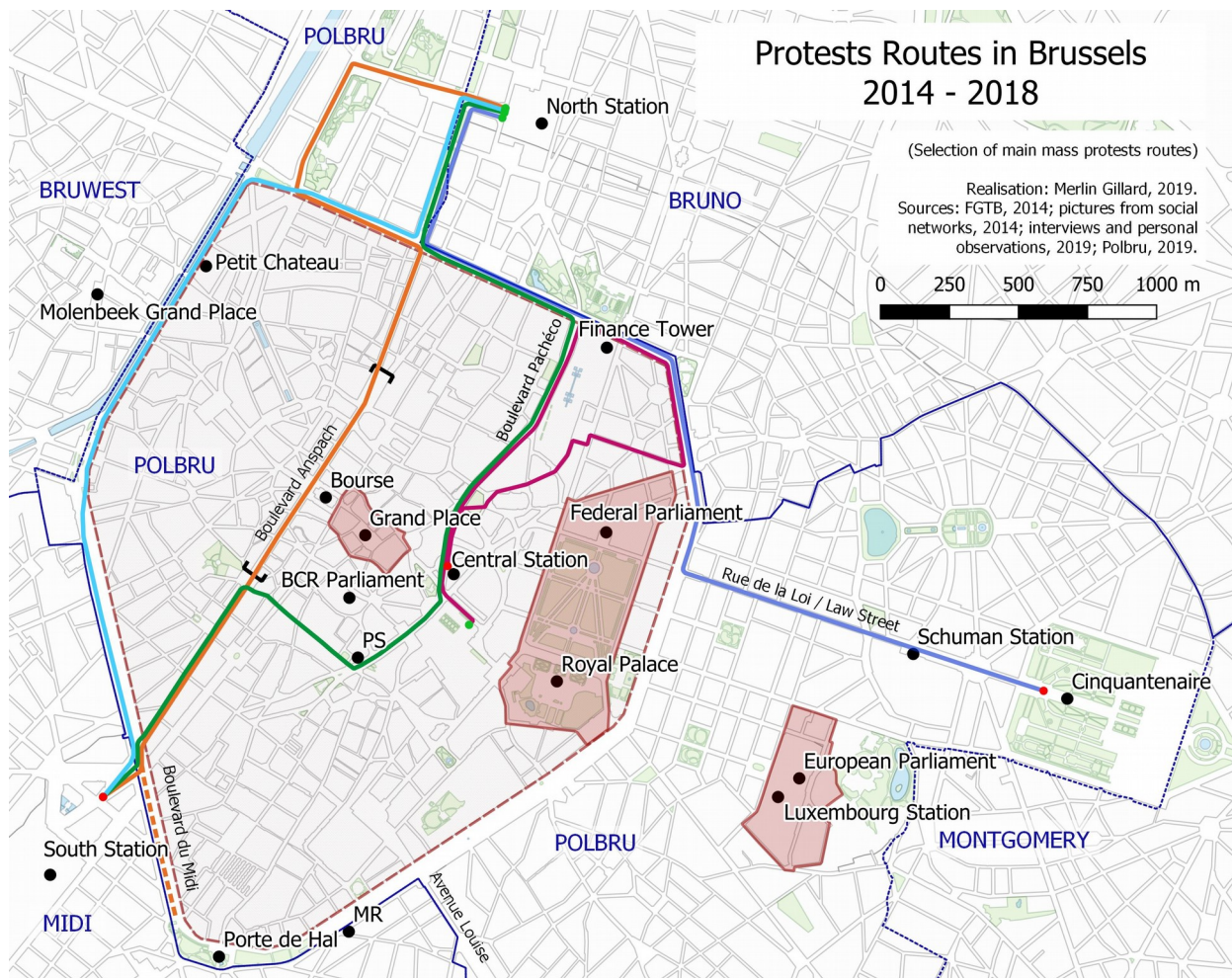


Figure 15: Common mass protests routes in Brussels (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

In addition to these neutral zones, other areas are forbidden to protests by Brussels municipal council, for touristic and commercial interests. An area encompassing the *Grand-Place* and the neighbouring blocks, part of the official UNESCO designated area, is forbidden for most protests: “we try to avoid demonstrations on *Grand-Place* because of the cultural and touristic aspect, and actually the access streets are very small too”¹⁵¹. The whole ‘Pentagon’ (city centre, the red-dotted line on Figure 15) on Saturdays, seen as the commercial day by the municipality, is a protest-free zone as well. Generally, protests are also forbidden on the premises of festive events in public places, from *Plaisirs d’Hiver* to the FGTB *Fête du Premier Mai*.

A last area is forbidden: since the start of the “test-phase” of the pedestrian zone on Anspach boulevard, in 2015, protests are prohibited in this zone (in black brackets on Figure 15). Now that the transformation of this avenue dedicated to cars into a touristic pedestrian is almost finished, it is still forbidden to protest there. First, the new urban design of the boulevard does not allow for a crowd to flow very easily. Second, it could also be seen as hindering the touristic and commercial activities and

151 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

events that take place in this area and are strongly promoted by the city (Marchal 2017). Indeed, while it was implemented with the aim to enforce a sustainable transport policy and for inhabitants to reclaim public space, the whole project lacked public participation, eventually raising questions about the right to the city (Kębłowski et al. 2019). In this respect, a more thorough study of the impact of the pedestrianisation on Brussels political geography would be very much welcome. Accordingly, the classical North-South protests which used to go via Anspach boulevard were deviated in 2015 via Pachéco boulevard (in green on Figure 15): “it’s often the same route, it’s a North-South route, whether we like it or not, now with the pedestrian area we’re limited”¹⁵².

The North-South route is one of the privileged itineraries for massive protests, such as unions protests. Such itineraries are notably chosen on the basis of the location of large train stations, which are practical for participants’ mobility and to drain massive crowds to the protests. Therefore mass protests are always organised from one large station to the other. The central station is not so large and thus the police tends to avoid starting or ending mass protests there. On the other hand, the *Cinquantenaire* Park has smaller stations nearby (Schuman, Merode), but it is often used as an ending point when protests end with a concert (this also means that the flow of people going back home will be more spread in time), such as in the case of the *Right(s) Now* protest (blue line on Figure 15). Crowd management is insured in the stations by the railway police, which implements precise circulation management in order to avoid stampede. For example, they will reserve some stairs for going down to the platform and others to go up to the main station, and channel the passengers flow through accesses they might not be familiar with¹⁵³. Thus the police strongly incites organisers to prepare a communication plan, addressed to the protesters, mentioning the starting and ending points of the protest, and especially that protesters should comply with the indications of stewards (sometimes asked to help directing protesters to selected entries of the stations) and of railway police¹⁵⁴.

Eventually, a last factor for deciding the itinerary of the protest is that of the interest points. Protesters potentially have one or several places in front of which they want to protest, to symbolically address their message. For example, protests on the subject of EU policies are organised in the European neighbourhood (itinerary in dark blue on the map 10); protests focused on migration policies are mostly organised along a North-South itinerary, but deviated in order to pass near the Canal, Molenbeek neighbourhood and the *Petit-Château* asylum seekers centre (itinerary in light blue). However, it is difficult to find any interest points for unions along the North-South unions protest itinerary. Of course, only some mass protest itineraries are shown on Figure 15 and the large number of protests in Brussels uses a diversity of itineraries. Still, they can be strongly limited by laws

152 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

153 Interview with J.-P. Pistrat, head of railway police, 05/03/2019.

154 Observations at the “Right(s) Now!” protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019.

and by the police recommendations. For mass protests, this also induces a routine in itineraries, which present a lack of meaning for some protesters:

“Among our militants the institutionalization of the demonstration is becoming a problem. When we organise a demonstration, it’s not really to disturb public order, but it’s still to cause minimal disturbance, and in the current demonstration routes, well, we no longer really have that impression. Activists often talk about them as a tour supervised by the police...”¹⁵⁵

Indeed, such routines or rituals closely monitored by the police, which controls when, where and how the protest will happen, induces a “neutralisation” of the protesters (Rigouste 2015, p. 282).

c) Intense policing collaboration

Policing protests often necessitate the collaboration of several police zones, notably if the protest itinerary goes through different police zones (but not only: this would also be the case when support troops are sent from other PZ or CIK). Itineraries like the North-South route indeed start and end in different zones than the Brussels-Capital-Ixelles one, which is still the main concerned ZP and will thus be in charge of the global coordination of the protest¹⁵⁶. Called “Gold Commander”, the head of this ZP will thus be in charge of the coordination of policing operations during the protest¹⁵⁷, with a whole hierarchical system at his orders (grouping all PZ involved). Such command chain is particularly useful when disorders happen and high profile policing – or offensive police intervention, as depicted in case-study 4 – is enforced. This coordination seems to have been poorly applied during the 6/11/2014 protest, but it has been improved since then. Collaboration still suffers flaws, notably when it is impromptu, e.g. during multi-zonal unexpected protests or occupations of public places by racialised people¹⁵⁸, but it is under amelioration according to the *Comité P*¹⁵⁹ (2018).

Police also collaborate with an exterior corps: the protests’ internal security or stewards. According to a general intelligence officer, “stewards are a little bit our assistants and the demonstrators’ guides”¹⁶⁰: while the role of the former is to keep in contact with protestors (notably to ensure that the route is respected) and to detect and manage any potential disorders, stewards play as a filter to prevent part of the disorders to happen, by keeping an eye open for any disorder and guiding protestors on the route. Thus, they constitute the first barrier (but which does not intend to be really resistant and is thus easily overcome) opposed to protestors that wish to go off route and might stop the less convinced one. This role of “assistant” of the police goes to the extent that a small meeting is

155 Interview with Sam*, steward at FGTB, 20/03/2019.

156 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

157 That person thus replaces the coordinating director (“DirCo”) of the Brussels judiciary district which should normally legally be in charge of it. This is the result of a specific agreement between Brussels municipalities and police zones.

158 For example, the so-called ‘riots’ in November 2017 at Bourse, following the qualification of Morocco football team for the men World Cup, when young racialised people took the streets in the centre and were met with violent police intervention (Belga 2017; Leroij 2019).

159 This federal institutions is notably charged of the control of the police.

160 Interview with N. Philippi, 28/03/2019.

organised before the protest with the stewards, where the main general intelligence officer explains them the tasks they are expected to perform and the general route¹⁶¹. Overall, the role of stewards does not seem to have evolved very much, although their autonomy might have increased. An interviewee has pointed out that their role is now more proactive: they should “evaluate the situation”¹⁶². A formation given by a private security company was also organised recently for stewards of all unions¹⁶³, a possible indication of a growing professionalisation of the function.

Those three elements (negotiation of the terms, itinerary definition, and policing collaboration) are systematically enforced for all authorised protests (e.g. unions protests) and thus form routines in the policing of protests. Still, as I have shown here, there are under a slow permanent evolution, based on localised factors such as experience learning and external factors (e.g. the pedestrianisation of parts of an itinerary). Notably, these evolutions have produced a slight reinforcement of the ‘borders’ of protests. Operationally, as argued by Whelan and Molnar (2017a) and Gorringer 2008, protest policing highly depends on local factors – although the global context is also determining for strategic tendencies.

7.3.2. *Negotiated management: the power to grant legitimacy*

Not all protests are declared nor authorised. There exists a wide range of other possibilities, each of them calling specific policing tactics. Here I first analyse these tactics, then I show how police determine which tactic they use.

a) The centrality of space in both low and high profile tactics

The tactic described with case-study 3 is called by the police the tactic of “de-escalation”: “we are relatively discreet except near the places we have to protect. [...] At the beginning, in principle, we’re dressed with soft gear. We’re not here to fight, that’s the message we want to send”¹⁶⁴. As underlined earlier, this aims to avoid provoking the protesters, and thus avoid conflict – in complement to the negotiation and permanently staying in contact. Conflicts are avoided until the tolerance levels of the police are reached. Such tolerance levels are written in the police risk analysis, decided amongst the general operations director and the mayor, and potentially negotiated with the organiser at the preparation meeting. For example, at the unions’ protest in front of FEB, red paint was thrown on the façade, but it did not foster the police intervention, possibly because it had been negotiated before or it had been predicted by the police. Negotiation at the moment might also have played a role. De-escalation tactics are inscribed in space too: one of the tolerance level could be reached if protesters

161 Observations at the “Right(s) Now!” protest preparation meeting, 30/04/2019.

162 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

163 Interview with B. Deceukelier, responsible for actions at CSC, 02/04/2019.

164 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

would go off route. The intervention police, hidden in lateral streets when everything happens as negotiated, would then intervene and push back the protesters. In this framework, the intervention police actually constitute the last barrier of a multi-layered flexible enclosure of the protest, also constituted of stewards and traffic police (see Figure 12).

By contrast, high profile policing (or escalated force policing), allegedly enforced before the 1990s in Brussels under the denomination “maintaining and restoring public order” (MRPO)¹⁶⁵, was solely based on police presence in full gear and mass arrests, intervention would happen rather quickly. “Before, when someone threw a paving stone [in a demonstration], the police would go in [right away], go get him and it would escalate quickly”¹⁶⁶. Such techniques can still happen today, when tolerance levels are reached, i.e. when the police are not satisfied with the negotiation or the protesters’ behaviours (see below). At that point, strategies of dispersion or confinement of the protesters would be enforced, which are also deeply inscribed in space.

In the strategic incapacitation model, which combines tactics from both models exposed above, Wood (2015, pp. 54–57) points out strategies of perimeter fencing and designation of “free speech zones” in the USA during political summits. Recently, such zone has been implemented in Brussels for the 2018 North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) summit, in prevention for large demonstrations that could happen during this period, while the buildings where the summit took place were included in a large security perimeter, forbidden to the population (La Libre 2018). However, this remains an exception in Brussels.

As highlighted before (see section 7.3.1.b), this shows that Brussels police is greatly concerned with controlling the protesters circulations: “police efforts to control the flow and movement of demonstrators are at the centre of their strategic neutralization tactics” (Wood 2015, p.54; see also Vitale 2005; Whelan, Molnar 2017). Both MRPO and NMPS strategies rely on spatial tactics of circulation management and micro-borders creation, just like festive events.

b) Negotiated management or differentiated policing?

The shift from MRPO to NMPS in Belgium actually reflects global changes in protest policing, as pointed out by Whelan and Molnar (2017, pp.1-2): “public order policing has undergone a significant shift [...] from the traditional ‘escalated force’ model [...] towards the use of ‘negotiated management’, [...] which remained dominant until the late 1990s”. Since then however, the strategic incapacitation model has been developed, combining soft, hard and ‘paramilitary’ tactics. Under this rationale, police choose their tactics in a wide spectrum of tactics (from soft to hard tactics), notably according to local or contextual characteristics (De Lint, Hall 2009; Wood 2015; Whelan, Molnar 2017a). It is

165 « Maintien et rétablissement de l’ordre public » or MROP. (Interviews with P. Vanhees and P. Vandersmissen, 2019.)

166 Interview with P. Vanhees, Uccle police commissioner, 16/04/2019.

arguable that it is also the case in Brussels, although the police officially affirms that its tactics are that of negotiated management.

In Belgium, the NMPS ideology is based on the construction of a narrative that recognises the rights to gather in a public space and to protest while it immediately opposes to that the legal necessity to ask for an authorisation:

“We are fully aware that the right to protest for any cause is fully legitimate, which does not exclude that there are still some rules in the organization. [...] The constitution says that when it is done in public space, the right to gather is subject to the rules of the law. And the law says that you must obtain the authorization of the administrative authority.”¹⁶⁷

According to the same interviewee, this leads to three different situations:

- a protest is authorised and its modalities have been negotiated: “the police tolerance level is very high since everything is negotiated, so even if there are small incidents, we will postpone our interventions”¹⁶⁸;
- a protest has been formally forbidden by the mayor (this is quite a rare case): the police has theoretically less discretionary power because it needs to ensure that the protest doesn’t take place, this necessitates many troops and negotiation on the field will not take place;
- a protest which was not declared happens and is considered “tolerated until no incidents occur”. This is a “grey zone [...] and it is then that as police we have the most leeway”¹⁶⁹.

Concerning the first situation, protesters seen as ‘legitimate interlocutors’ (e.g. white and middle class protesters for climate, unions chiefs...): negotiations can occur, both in offices and on field. They can be more difficult if police find that protesters have too big ambitions for police liking (e.g. case-study 3), but overall there is a mutual trust relationship building on the long term. Organising such protest is seen by both parties as a legitimate ‘partnership’. Still, under NMPS, policing can be considered as a border for the protest, and everything outside that border is deemed illegal (while there can also illegal acts inside the border but there’s more tolerance). This is actually fully understood by this union actions coordinator: “it’s a bit like a party hall you’re given, and you can’t go outside the hall – which is legitimate because we have an agreement. But it’s an advantage: at least you’ve got a little freedom in your event”¹⁷⁰. As a whole, NMPS actually consists in setting and negotiating the protests’ borders, not only spatial ones, but also the extent to which certain types of actions are possible. Accordingly, NMPS can be considered as a kind of “preventive repression” (Codaccioni 2019; see also Fernandez 2008) which downsizes ‘legitimate’ protesters’ ambitions. Indeed, this “negotiated co-management” only has a role of “pacification” and “strategic neutralisation” (Rigouste 2015, p. 259).

167 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019. This strictly matches what Terilnck explains in his summary of the OOP41, the framework for NMPS (2016).

168 *Ibid.*

169 *Ibid.*

170 Interview with C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, 19/02/2019.

Additionally, setting the borders of these actions with the organisers enables the police to sort out the ‘good’ and the ‘bad’ protesters, or the legitimate and illegitimate ones. They can also be helped in this by the work of the stewards. For example, at a recent protest of ‘Youth for Climate’ (31/03/2019), the main parade stopped at one point (in Law street) to let go Yellow Vests and anarchists in the front which were then confined by the police in a nearby street and arrested after some windows were broken (RTBF 2019a). During the *Right(s) Now* protest, a similar process happened: police in plain clothes circled the people they had identified as potential troublemakers, and took them to a perpendicular street where they checked their identities behind a building, protected by a line of intervention police¹⁷¹.

Moving ‘more radical’ protesters away, just like installing ‘barriers’ at the end of the North-South itinerary has the aim of avoiding disorders, material damage and eventually riots. This is part of another narrative, deeply rooted in both the police discourses and that of the unions: “if we want to spread our political message, we don't want troublemakers to take over in terms of media impact”¹⁷². Thus the negotiated protest has to happen peacefully.

In the last situation described above (the “grey zone”), police still attempt to conduct immediate negotiation with the protesters. However the length of this negotiation and the way it happens seems to be highly dependent on the kind of protest group. It could be argued that the police have a varying tolerance towards protesters based on their degree of ‘radicalness’ and ‘legitimacy’.

Shortly, several comparisons based on recent examples can be drawn. In March and June of this year, activists of the movement ‘Occupy for Climate’ were granted provisory authorisation to occupy neutral zones (on Law street on March 24 and in front of the European Parliament on May 25 (RTBF 2019b; Belga 2019b) – which are normally considered absolutely forbidden and would have called direct intervention. Protesters wanted to stay the night in front of the Parliament, but after some negotiation with the police, they were displaced in early evening from some meters out of the neutral zone. The mayor also played a determining role by giving indications on its tolerance levels to police officers on the field. It can be argued that he only tolerated an ‘acceptable’ amount of ‘radicalness’: the non-violent movement called for legal action and to “vote for the right people” – nothing that really questions traditional representative democracy.

On the other hand, the Yellow Vests – protesters with less identifiable representatives (or no representative at all) and with revolutionary and anarchist elements – were faced with high profile troops the first times they marched in Brussels (November 2018), trying to get into the neutral zone

171 Interview with Romain*, protester, 13/05/2019.

172 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

near Parc, or more recently at the May 26 protest. Indeed, they questioned the representative democracy, calling for direct, violent action against capitalism and the State – and actually already materializing such action by setting a police car on fire on November 30, 2018 (Secours Rouge 2018a; Alliance du 1er Mai Révolutionnaire 2019). Of course, here the police tolerance levels were quickly attained, but did the police attempt to negotiate at all?

At several other protests (mentioned below), negotiation could not happen, either because the police did not attempt to negotiate, and more rarely because protesters refused to negotiate too. For example, an organiser of such a protest told me in an interview how their police contact person was ignored by the police, which directly employed confinement methods and arrests¹⁷³. Often without a leader, these protesters are also seen as unpredictable by the police: “the anarcho-autonomous, [...] they go in all directions without telling us where they’re heading to”¹⁷⁴. For the police, this implies that negotiation will fail (Fernandez 2008). Such ‘unpredictable’ groups with whom negotiation rarely happens also include Yellow Vests, (queer-)feminist groups¹⁷⁵ and racialised youngsters (see Belga 2017 and below). These populations, supposedly seen as illegitimate, and often depicted as ‘the bad guys’¹⁷⁶, were quickly faced with dispersion or containment strategies. When possible, these illegitimate protesters are identified and arrested: “sometimes we have to disperse [a demonstration], but then everyone goes in all directions and you can have 5-6 incidents everywhere. So we always prefer to confine, group the incidents [and then] eventually search, identify and/or arrest [protesters]”¹⁷⁷. “We like to know who was there, and we’ll write a municipal administrative ticket because they made an unauthorised demonstration: there are also sanctions [for that]”¹⁷⁸.

Such contexts can also lead to police violence, both in the streets as it was the case in case-study 4, and in police vehicles and police stations, as was reported by feminist protesters (Malfrap-USE, Féminisme Libertaire Bruxelles 2016). This police violence, directed towards the poor, racialised people, and/or queer people and women, is representative of State violence. The latter is also visible when police agents commit ‘abuses’ and hurt protesters and troublemakers seen as illegitimate. In fact, Rigouste (2012) argues that it is intrinsically part of the institution’s role and the police agents’ job (see also section 7.3.3.b).

173 Interview with Amélie*, co-organiser of a Pro-Choice protest, 02/04/2019.

174 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

175 Brussels has a rich recent history of repressed (queer-)feminist protests, amongst which the repression of the Reclaim the Night – a queerfeminist protest against the exclusion of and violence on trans people and women in public places (!) (Anon. 2018) –, that of a Pro-Choice protest against anti-abortion protesters (Malfrap 2016), that of the Reclaim the Pride – a collective protesting against the political and economic recuperation of the ‘Belgian Pride’, which completely experienced sanctuarisation (Le Soir 2019).

176 Several interviews with police officials, 2019.

177 Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

178 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

Therefore, so-called NMPS does not only include negotiated and liaison techniques, but more hard tactics are also enforced based on the situation, the protesters' behaviour and their perceived legitimacy. Following de Lint and Hall for Canada (2009), this model could be described as follows: the "police deploy a range of tools that span a continuum from more 'hard' prohibitive and coercive mechanisms to 'soft' forms of consent" (Whelan, Molnar 2017a, p. 2). Rather than applying negotiated techniques every time, the police on the field (and the mayor in his office) have a discretionary power in deciding who they negotiate with and under which conditions. Such decisions are notably determined by the habitus of both the police and the mayor: their deeply rooted habits and interpretations and their socialisation influence structurally the way they perceive protesters (see Bourdieu 1980; Wood 2015, p. 30). They detain the power to grant legitimacy to certain kinds of protesters.

7.3.3. *Differentiated impact of antiterrorism in protests policing*

a) Impact of the state of exception

Besides the very long term evolution of protests policing, was there any change fostered by the terrorist attacks? No proof of that was found when conducting fieldwork and pictures analysis. On the other hand, interviewees agree to say that the terrorist attacks only had little impact on protests policing. While protests, just like any other mass gatherings in public space, are still considered since the attacks 'soft targets', measures of target hardening were only enforced for a limited time after the attacks. Unfortunately, this period could not be established exactly but it is rather sure that it does not match the alert level. Some debate also occurred concerning the possibility to organise protests in the direct aftermath of the attacks.

"Under level 4, all gatherings were prohibited, to protect people from themselves. Otherwise under level 3, demonstrations were allowed but we took a little more drastic measures: we sometimes put police vehicles in some streets to prevent a vehicle from entering the procession. We also asked the unions for their support and they also put a truck there. [...] At first, we also looked at what was in the backpacks. But again, someone can say "the police are provoking", so we had to communicate well"¹⁷⁹.

C. Zaragoza, responsible for actions at FGTB, points out the similar events, adding that they issued a communication to their activists advising not to take bags and forbidding bangers. These measures were reduced afterwards, and supposedly when the alert level was brought down to 2 (in January 2018), such measures were not enforced any more. Allegedly, it was not materially possible to generalise such measures of target hardening: it is quite demanding in terms of material to block all perpendicular streets with trucks or concrete blocks during a protest, and such measures would be

179 Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

counterproductive with the objective of de-escalation¹⁸⁰. Hence, measures of state of exception for protests only lasted while the state of exception was ‘officially’ in place, i.e. under level 3 and 4.

This situation is quite opposite to the French one, where protests targeting the COP21, just after the 2015 November attacks, were firmly repressed, notably preventively. The French government used measures of the state of exception to preventively arrest or house arrest a number of protesters that could represent or organise trouble at those protests (Codaccioni 2019). Similar processes happened at a number of other protests in the following years. In Belgium, protesters have rarely faced preventive arrests (and more rarely house arrests). 3 people were preventively arrested in 2012 (Secours Rouge 2018b), and 70 Yellow Vests were arrested preventively, notably because they carried “weapons”¹⁸¹ on December 8, 2018 (L’Obs 2018). The interviewees do not link this with the antiterrorist context: gatherings where the participants come with weapons are forbidden by law.

Eventually, in the direct aftermath of 2016 Brussels attacks, while the remembrance gathering on the day of the attacks happened without any disorder or arrests (RTBF 2016b), the organisers of a second remembrance gathering on March 27 were advised against organising it, due to the fact that the police was still looking for an armed terrorist¹⁸². However, hooligans and far-right protesters still took the streets and performed nazi salutes – they were first escorted by the police and eventually dispersed. The next week, far-right groups wanted to organise a protest in Molenbeek, and left-wing protesters decided to protest against them by organising another peaceful gathering (Belga 2016). Considering the possibility of conflicts, several municipalities and the region¹⁸³ forbid all protests that day (02/04/2016). Still, left-wing protesters decided to come to the peaceful protest that day, and were arrested by the police¹⁸⁴, allegedly because the protest was forbidden and they did not want to disperse (Le Soir 2016). Yet, according to libertarian feminists activists, these arrests were conducted in discriminate and sexist ways: antifascists protesters argue that fascist protesters were not arrested the same day although they also came to protest (Malfrap-USE, Féminisme Libertaire Bruxelles 2016).

It is arguable that the context of the attacks has brought about political tensions, especially between nationalist far-right movements and left-wing movements. However the measures taken in these cases do not differ from measures planned by the NMPS strategy or other common policing practices (such as police violence, or police sexist and racist practices).

180 Interviews with J.-P. Pistrat and P. Vandersmissen, police commissioners, 2019.

181 According to several interviewees (J.-P. Pistrat, D. Van Calck, Romain*), objects considered as ‘weapons’, or at least confiscated by the police because they would enable the protester to defend themselves and resist a police assault, range from helmets and ski glasses to batons.

182 Interview with P. Vandersmissen, head commissioner of Brussels police intervention unit, 14/03/2019.

183 A recent law enables the BCR President-Minister to forbid protests for the whole region. According to P. Vandersmissen, this occasion was the first time that such measure was taken at the regional level.

184 Remarkably, P. Vandersmissen was at the head of his troops that day, and the first person he arrested was A. Deswaef, president of the human rights league in Belgium (Le Soir 2016).

PROTESTS: SYNTHETIC TABLE		
Object	Factor for evolution	Date
Enforcement of NMPS and mixed techniques	Global context & local specificities	1990s / 2014 (official enforcement)
'Cardboard stewards' under South station bridge	Recurrent disorders on Midi boulevard	2017
North-South protests route deviated from Anspach to Pachéco boulevard	Pedestrianisation of Anspach boulevard	2015
Exceptional measures		
Advise against taking bags	Terrorist attacks	2015-16 (cancelled shortly after)
Advise against taking bangers / bangers forbidden	Terrorist attacks but also longer term evolution	2015-16
Trucks around protests places	Terrorist attacks	2015-16 (cancelled shortly after)

Figure 16: Synthesis table of the evolution of security measures for protests (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

b) The enemy from within

Still, antiterrorism has reinforced the construction of the “enemy from within”, which potentially impacts the way protests or gatherings are policed, notably the extent to which there will be police violence. If the subject would need further research, particularly in the Belgian context, it is still possible to point out several elements. In fact, Leroij (2018) shows how, after a number of repressed violent gatherings of racialised – here Arab – youngsters in Brussels city centre, political and media discourses have built the image of “an undefendable population, because ontologically violent” (*ibid.*). This is reinforced by the antiterrorist context, where Arab and Muslim people are considered suspects by default and are thus designated as the “enemy from within”. Building such an image legitimates the measures of control and repression of such population in a neocolonial dual populations management (*ibid.*). Indeed, after the 2015-16 terrorist attacks, several hundreds of house searches and arrests were performed by the police, often very violently and conducting to a number of “police abuses” and human rights violations (Human Rights Watch 2016).

It is arguable that this “treatment of exception” (Leroij 2018), reinforced by the antiterrorist context, is also applied in protests policing. In USA and in France, the “‘terrorist’ label [is applied] to activists” (Boghosian 2007), associating them with “the worst of the worst” and legitimising and enabling a harsher repression on them (Boghosian 2007; Codaccioni 2019). In fact, “the normal citizen is neither a Muslim nor a rebel” (Maes 2016), and could face repression a lot more rarely than marginalised populations. “Police violence is a rational production, structured by political and social economic power relations, which are technically regulated by the State. It is at the centre of a

government mechanism of the undesirable and the miserable, the damned and the rebellious”
(Rigouste 2012, p. 225, my translation).

8. Discussion

Here, I first propose a general comparison of the policing of festive events and protests and of their evolution under antiterrorism. This discussion is declined in three ways: first, the exceptionality of policing tactics, second the use of space in policing tactics, and third the contribution of such antiterrorism measures to the global market of security. Eventually, the second part of this section (starting p. 117) is dedicated to assessing the hypothesis of the sanctuarisation of public space.

8.1. *The unequal impact of antiterrorism on protests and festive events policing*

8.1.1. *State of exception*

From the elements described and analysed previously, it is pretty clear that antiterrorist measures were applied in the long term to festive events while this was not the case for protests. Since the 2015-2016 attacks, both types of events are considered ‘soft targets’ because they constitute of a massive gathering of people. Still, some interviewees declare that the danger for protests is less strong, since this ‘target’ is moving. Therefore, while both types of events have seen an increase in their securitisation after the attacks, these measures have only been made permanent for festive events. In fact, for festive events the main factor which appears determinant for such security measures is the antiterrorist context (see Coaffee 2017), while for protests (apart from access control measures such as searches) it rather depends on the global policing context, marginally adapted with local specificities (see Wood 2015; Whelan, Molnar 2017a). In addition to spatial tactics, several types of staff (and technologies like CCTV) operate the surveillance of these events.

In addition to antiterrorism as a relevant factor for protests security evolution, I have also pointed out evolutions based on local specificities, on lessons from past experiences and information exchanges between security actors, for both types of events.

Exception measures, such as the generalisation of enclosures and searches, have been extended in the long run for festive events. Such exception measures (e.g. bag searches) have not been enforced for long in the case of protests. However, in the antiterrorist context, protests – particularly unauthorised ones – and the disorders they could produce are considered a threat by the police (Wood 2015, p. 19). Thus, due to the discretionary power of both mayors and the police in granting legitimacy to protesters, it could also be argued that the current regime of protests policing – negotiated management and hard tactics when deemed necessary – is one of exception.

In fact, Agamben (2014) points out that there has been a shift between Foucault’s disciplinary state (2007 [1978]) towards Deleuze’s control state (2003 [1990]), “because what [the State] wants is not to *order* and to *impose discipline* but rather to *manage* and to *control*” (Agamben 2014, my

emphasis). This is achieved, however, through Foucault's security apparatuses of enclosures and circulations management (Foucault 2007 [1978]; Klauser 2013a). The control state, or the security state, invokes "security reasons" (*ibid.*) to enforce all policing acts (such as those described in this work). Indeed, "security reasons" are the grounds invoked to impose exceptional measures to festive events, and close security to protests, which are *in fine* aimed at threat and disorder management.

However, concerning protests, there remains slight differences with other countries, such as France or the USA (Wood, Rigouste 2015): techniques and materials are not yet militarised at the same level. Indeed, non-lethal weapons for example are not used in Brussels to police protests – though some PZ have already tested tasers, and flashballs have been used in other (postcolonial) policing contexts (Lambert 2017; Durant 2018). Nevertheless, the state of exception has brought the army in Brussels streets, to perform surveillance and preemption tasks.

8.1.2. *Micro-spatial circulations management*

Security apparatuses of the state of exception and the security state described in this work are deeply rooted in and mediated by space (Klauser 2013a). On one side, the festive events' sites are carefully chosen and enclosed, their entries and exits managed, and surveillance is generalised. On the other side, the geography of protests relies on several constraints ensuring the pacification of the political and economical life, while the protests in themselves are monitored at different scales, using several 'multi-layered policing barriers' (i.e. the stewards, the traffic police and the low-profile intervention police). The policing of both types of events, even if such events are not 'mega-events', can be fully grasped and interpreted when looking at mega-events (see notably Franzén 2001; Fernandez 2008; Fussey et al. 2012; Klauser 2013b; Whelan, Molnar 2017). Authors emphasise how events are secured by using circulations management, micro-scale borders and access control. All these elements can be found in the policing of festive events and protests, as shown in table *Erreur : source de la référence non trouvée.*

8.1.3. *Security epistemic communities and the global security market*

An additional impact of antiterrorism is the reinforcement (or the constitution) of security networks or epistemic communities in Brussels. Several interviewees pointed out the intense and efficient collaboration that happens between multiple actors, for example between security coordinators of different (para-)public and private organisations, that acquire in the meantime pertinent experience.

In fact, an event's general organisation (see section 6.1.1) involves a great number of actors, that has radically increased with the attacks and the generalisation of antiterrorist material target hardeners. Moreover, organisers of events and protests are legally responsible for the security of their event in the NMPS framework. Both these factors imply that they now have to draw several sub-contracts with

private security actors (in the case of festive events), in addition to being in close contact with the police, the emergency planning officer and other emergency actors. On one side events are often recurring and thus organisers tend to recruit the same companies if they were satisfied with them: “we’ve been working for 10 years with the same company on logistics and security [...] the relationships are so important between us and them that we tell ourselves : if the relationship is good, it already guarantees that the event will run smoothly”¹⁸⁵. This also means that security and logistics companies that are involved in a high number of events (e.g. *Step in Live*) are very frequently in contact with the public security actors. Several trust relationships are thus built between all these actors, including with the suppliers of security logistics.

Networks of actors and their intense collaboration are also at work in the protests field, although maybe more timidly. A perfect example is that of unions internal security organisation: interviewed security coordinators testified of the construction of trust relationship with police coordinators and police contact points. Again, this is due to the NMPS framework, where a negotiation takes place which needs to end well in order to be able to organise the next protest. The iteration of regular protest organisation involving the same actors on both sides (unions and police) reinforces this process. Additionally, the requirement of unions to provide for an internal security body specialised in crowd control or supervision (stewards) has led them to collaborate with private security services to give them a training course.

First, such dynamics create “epistemic communities” of the security field, both in the national and international contexts, enabling exchanges of knowledge, tactics, methods and ideas (Haas 1992). Indeed, concerning protests policing, Wood (2015) has shown how their diffusion occurred globally. Protest security officers also have direct occasions to meet: “I was recently at a European colloquium and I could exchange with a Czech jurist”¹⁸⁶. Second,

“there emerges a massive boom in a convergent industrial complex encompassing security, surveillance, military technology, prisons, corrections, and electronic entertainment. Within the broader apparatus of the military-industrial-media-entertainment network, these fusing industries exploit the cross-fertilization and blurring between the traditional military imperatives of war, external to the state, and those of the policing internal to it” (Graham 2010, p. 73).

Indeed, this also contributes to the constitution of a “global violence market” as a new survival strategy for neoliberal capitalism. The latter is built on (and reinforced by) “total war” and on the continuous proliferation of “new threats”, thus thriving on counterinsurgency via “antiterrorism, antigang, and antiriot” strategies and technologies (Rigouste 2015).

185 Interview with S. Laloux, actions and communication coordinator at FGTB-Brussels, 22/02/2019.

186 Interview with D. Van Calck, general director of operations for protests at Brussels police, 26/02/2019.

In this context, enclosed urban festive events seen as a security dispossession of public space for private interests are one of the key ‘soft’ security strategies, dissimulated behind the argument of protection and pre-emption of terrorist threats. In parallel, capitalism profits from State violence and counterinsurgency, which are the only answers to the protests in reaction to social violence produced by capitalism (Leroij 2018). A key role in the multiple “autopoiesis” (Rigouste 2015) of neoliberal security capitalism is played by “proactive policing”: proactivity is “the ability of an economic actor to produce the conditions of existence and extension of its profit, its ability to generate the markets on which it depends” (*ibid.*, p.238). Therefore here the counter-insurgency autopoiesis is defined by Rigouste as “its ability to provoke pacifiable forms of police warfare that will require investment in the development of the counter-insurgency itself, and the giant markets that are articulated within it” (*ibid.*, p.228).

8.2. Hypothesis assessment: towards the sanctuarisation of events in public space? The intensification of policing for better or for worse.

In this final section, I assess the hypothesis of sanctuarisation considering the empiric results and analysis. As a reminder, the main hypothesis was:

“Antiterrorism accelerates the neoliberal transformation of States into authoritarian, security, exception-driven regimes. This can be illustrated in entrepreneurial cities by a process of sanctuarisation of public places during mass events, which affects the right to the city.”

8.2.1. *Impact of security measures on public space*

First, the measures exposed earlier as measures of threat and disorder management in the state of exception and the control state clearly have a spatial impact. Both spatial security measures (micro-scale borders, access control, circulations management...) and other measures (e.g. surveillance, legal changes...) are eventually applied on public places where the events take place. They create *fortified enclaves of surveillance* (Klauser 2013b) during these events: the spaces of the festive event or of the protest are carefully enclosed by different security apparatuses and carefully monitored, in ways that are not generally found in the rest of public space. Such measures can concern urban design, modified for the “purification” of space during and nearby sport mega-events (Fussey et al. 2012). Here, urban design goes under temporary modifications (e.g. by adding Heras fences, concrete blocks or *chevaux de frise*), lasting a few hours (e.g. a protest or a small concert) to a few days (e.g. a festival). Eventually, such spaces could even be considered as “spaces of exception” (Agamben 2005; Coaffee 2015): spaces where the measures of state of exception, taken in times of crisis, are permanent, i.e. where exceptional measures are permanently necessary (Neocleous 2007b). The descriptions of Agamben (2005) and Coaffee (2015) however focus on spaces (“carceral spaces”

(*ibid.*)) where security is much more developed than what I have shown concerning Brussels, e.g. prisons or Olympic security enclaves and the criminalisation of poor local populations (*ibid.*).

These concepts could be summarised in that of sanctuarisation. As mentioned earlier, this concept is commonly used to describe spaces protected (enclosed) from violent protesters, for example buildings that host summits (Wood 2015) or even parts of a city¹⁸⁷. The aim of such sanctuarisation is to protect places from threats or disorders, which is also the conclusion that has been drawn in this work. Thus, public places where festive events and protests are organised are sanctuarised during those events: they are protected against external, and sometimes internal, threats (e.g. terrorist threat, but also stampede) and disorders (e.g. radical protests). In some cases (e.g. unplanned protests), the event is in itself a disorder and is repressed – hence it could be argued that public space as a whole is sanctuarised. Building on Coaffee’s argument (2015), sanctuarisation (in Brussels) is part of a tendency towards building spaces of exception.

SPATIAL SECURITY MEASURES		
Concept	Applied at festive events	Applied at protests
Micro-scale borders	Enclosing/fencing the sites	Multi-layered policing barriers
Access control	Searches	Searches under level 3 and afterwards only on protesters at risk
Circulations management	Suggested and monitored paths between sites; Anti-vehicle attack Jersey blocks	Route negotiation & high profile techniques (dispersion, containment)

Figure 17: Security measures using space, enforced under antiterrorism and in the framework of sanctuarisation in Brussels (Merlin Gillard, 2019).

8.2.2. *Economic and political function*

Additionally, sanctuarisation ensures the sanctification of both economic activities and political debate. In fact, sanctuarisation participates in one of the multiple dynamics of privatisation of the city, which has a tendency to increase (Dessouroux 2003). According to the same author, privatisation is ruled by three dimensions: “property, access to and regulation of space” which have been identified in this work as well. Particularly, “new forms of regulation in public places” appear (Decroly et al. 2003, p. 3), amongst which one could include NMPS and the generalisation of antiterrorist security measures. Moreover, in the privatisation rationale, research for security is

187 See, for example, discourses in France on the “sanctuarisation” of Promenade des Anglais (Nice) (France3 2017) or the “sanctuarisation of Bellecour square” (Lyon) (tempscritiques 2019).

predominant, along with the research for profit¹⁸⁸ (Dessouroux 2003). Indeed, with antiterrorist preventive and pre-emptive measures, the festive events are growingly secured, reassuring population and investors (Garnier 2008) and ensuring their ability to generate profit. Thanks to security apparatuses, commercial activities including tourism and festive events are sheltered against disorder (*ibid.*) and can efficiently generate profit.

In addition, the reinforcement of security measures leads to an increase in profit (and expertise) in another sector: the global security market (Graham 2010; Rigouste 2015; see p. 81). Elements of commodification (Zukin 1988) and disneyfication of the city, and of fostering a literally “eventful city” (Richards, Palmer 2010) have also been spotted during this work, for example branding the stages, multiplying festive events... These dynamics increase the need for sanctuarisation (which retroactively reinforces them): the party has to be secured, and if Brussels city and police prove their ability to do so, more parties can be organised.

In the neoliberal world-wide urban competition (Harvey 1989), this is part of the injunction for (growing) urban competitiveness and attractiveness towards tourists, which will supposedly bring prosperity and bring back economical growth. The organisation of festive events in public space is notably promoted by Brussels municipality under the idea of “re-appropriation public space” (Decroly et al. 2003; Van Crieckingen 2018), while the spatial effects it produces seem only to be opposite effects (to this idea of re-appropriation public space), those of privatisation and securitisation, and eventually gentrification (*ibid.*).

8.2.3. *Political function*

Therefore, sanctuarisation is also fundamentally political, because it has impacts on the right to the city, which is deeply conflictual (Lefebvre 1968; Margier, Melgaço 2016). In fact, the securitisation and privatisation of public spaces during events (both festive events and protests), as I have shown, relies on making the organiser responsible for those spaces (in the NMPS framework). Organisers are in charge of formally privatising such spaces in the case of festive events, or more simply in charge of their security (for both types of events). Putting the security responsibility solely on the organiser – though with a close monitoring of the police – implies that they set some of the rules on one hand, but also that they respect the police’s rules on the other hand. If the decision power on modalities of securitisation, privatisation and sanctuarisation is in the hands of one organiser and the police, it raises questions about the accessibility of public space for all.

188 Dessouroux (2003) also adds the sense of community belonging as a predominant theme in privatisation. It is indeed also predominant in marketing discourses of the festive city (see BSF communication for example and Pradel (2017)), while the extent to which festive events foster such sense of community belonging – in a neoliberal individualistic society – is questioned by Garnier (2008).

The NMPS strategy, as a preventive strategy, also enables a more peaceful management of some demonstrations (with ‘legitimate’ actors): through negotiation, protests organised by desirable, non-dangerous groups are allowed and monitored. This cooperation *de facto* implies, as explained in section 7.3, a pacification of the protests and a practical strategic neutralisation of the contestation (Wood, Rigouste 2015): questions of how and where to protest are deeply political, because they condition the follow-up of the protest. Moreover, by conjuring security reasons such as the interdiction to degrade public and private property, the obligation to follow negotiated and licensed itineraries, and the interdiction to protest in “neutral zones”, the public space in its political understanding is sanctified: the radical contestation or dissent is less and less possible in the conditions set by the party one protests against (*ibid.*).

This is particularly evident when looking at the ‘overlap’ of the festive and the protest in sanctuarisation. Forbidding specific places for protests specifically implies that, on the one hand, the ‘legitimate’ political life (e.g. legislative work), and on the other hand the economic activities (e.g. events, commerce), can happen without being disturbed by both the political life of the street and terrorist threats. For example, the neutral zone around Parc and the Federal Parliament is only ‘neutral’ towards protests: the military parade on national day and several festive events (e.g. BSF) are regularly organised there. Touristic and commercial activities, sacred in this economy, which occur in the Unesco zone and the Pentagon Saturday zone, are protected from street dissent as well. More generally, the sanctuarisation has two kinds of actions: on one side, it prevents and forbids radical dissent that would express and materialised in public places; on the other side, it secures legitimised and neutralised protests and negotiated, legitimate festive events. Of course, dissenting festive events (thus non-negotiated and non-approved) could also occur, but in the current framework they would be repressed and suppressed by the police. In fact, the sanctuarisation of public spaces during events is a guarantee that capitalism and State activities remain undisturbed.

Sanctuarisation is reinforced by antiterrorist measures, or exception measures, now made permanent notably affecting festive events. Such security measures were notably mobilised in the name of liberty – according to State actors, if these measures were not taken, the liberty to organise and participate in events would have been compromised (in addition to the need to reassure). However, “the myth of a ‘balance’ between security and liberty opens the (back-)door to an acceptance of all sorts of authoritarian security measures” (Neocleous 2007b, p. 133). In fact, measures of the “war on terror” (exception measures) are an alibi for conducting a “class war” (Neocleous 2007a, p. 503) and a post-colonial war on racialised people, constructed as the “enemies from within” (Rigouste 2012; Leroij 2018).

In this framework, the right to the city of marginalised people, precarious people, queer people, ‘undesirables’, and racialised people is greatly compromised. More generally, this is also the case for all those that do not “behave” as expected (Schuilenburg 2015). Sanctuarisation induces the exclusion of the enemy from within, the rebel, and the outcast from festive and political spaces¹⁸⁹. This has been shown here in what concerns political spaces, as radical modes of dissent (conducted by the pre-cited populations) were faced with high-profile policing and repression. Garnier (2008) notes that this is similar in the case of festive events:

“Confined in their unique role of ‘visitors’ invited to meander like tourists in their own city, the legitimate users have to be sheltered, as much as possible, from disorder and even from the mere sight of the outcasts of ‘globalisation’ and flexibilisation of the economy, always unpleasant in these places redesigned for enjoyment”¹⁹⁰ (p. 5, my translation).

Hence, given the habitus of policing agents and the constitution of an image of ‘enemy from within’ (Bourdieu 1980; Wood, Rigouste 2015; Leroij 2018), difficulties or refusal of accessing a public space could be opposed to members of those populations, sometimes simply because one would have refused to pay an entry or to be searched. Sanctuarisation of public spaces during events, also understood as a privatisation process, thus produces exclusion of marginalised populations. Hence, it also produces effects on representational spaces by reinforcing the power dynamics already at work in public space under capitalistic and State domination (Lefebvre 1991; Harvey 2010).

8.2.4. *The sanctuary paradox*

A last remark concerns the paradoxical dimension of sanctuarisation. The word in itself has a double meaning, depending on the positioning of the user of public space: it can be seen as a mechanism of legitimate protection to ensure shelter¹⁹¹, or it can be seen – along the position defended here – as a mechanism of exclusion, derived from that relative protection.

This is reflected in the observations made earlier and this discussion. Sanctuarisation ensures that an event in public place will be protected from external threats and disorders, using a range of practices, thereby ensuring a pacified and relatively safe space inside the perimeter of the sanctuarised area. However, this is achieved using violent and exclusive measures: fortifications, access control, circulations management, surveillance and the discretionary power to refuse access or to repress

189 Moreover, they are dispossessed of public places when the latter are reconfigured for events: “the spaces of representation forged by popular imagination and practice are called upon to be erased, covered and replaced on the ground, but also in the minds of the inhabitants, by representations of the space fabricated from scratch by [...] event designers” (Garnier 2008, p. 78).

190 Translated from French: “Les usagers légitimes, confinés dans le rôle qui est le leur, celui de « visiteurs » invités à déambuler comme des touristes dans leur propre ville, doivent, autant que faire se peut, être mis à l’abri des débordements et même de la simple vue des laissés pour compte de la « globalisation » et de la flexibilisation de l’économie, toujours désagréable dans ces lieux remodelés pour l’agrément.”

191 Notably, ‘sanctuary’ is sometimes used to describe cities that are protected against nuclear weapons REF, or that welcome undocumented migrants REF, but it could also be legitimate to consider that sanctuarisation of festive events protects them from tangible threats.

marginalised populations... If “security is always paramount” over liberty (Neocleous 2007b, p. 140), and given that the liberty is reversed to some thereby excluding others, can there be liberty?

9. Reflexivity

Before concluding this master thesis, I would like to reflect a little upon this work. Working on this topic enabled me to gain more experience in the diversity of methods used here, notably when conducting ethnographies and interviews. Concerning the ethnographies, although a plan was decided beforehand, several other modalities could have been improved (e.g. contacting the organisation in advance in order to be able to conduct participant observation amongst policing organisations). Concerning interviews, it was sometimes difficult to find a good positioning in front of the interviewee: until what point should I insist on an element, risking that the interviewee would not reply as openly for the further questions, or that the interviews last four hours each? On the contrary, by being too cautious I may have lost opportunities to look deeper into specific issues. Still, the semi-structured format seemed appropriated for this type of research.

Yet despite a well-thought methodology, it was difficult to rely on several sources. Even after the selection described in the methodology part, pictures collected on social networks depicted in majority only the crowd, while security measures were mostly in the pictures' margins which made it difficult to draw reliable conclusions. This same observation can be pointed out concerning interviews: the discourses of the interviewees are *de facto* biased, which is a point I may have sometimes overlooked (see notably Chamboredon et al. 1994).

More importantly, the range of topics covered by this master thesis might have been too wide. The original aim of this thesis – addressing the impact of antiterrorist measures on the policing of gatherings (precisely, festive events and protests) in public space – has been fulfilled, but it required to address this policing in general, which is a broad topic too. However, it has concentrated mostly on visible, material and spatial policing measures. A wide range of antiterrorist measures could not be addressed here, whether they are less visible in space or whether they focus on populations as a whole rather than on events (it was briefly touched upon in section 7.3.3.b).

Finally, there are still a number of topics associated with protests and festive events sanctuarisation that I would have liked to develop. Due to time and feasibility constraints, several superficialities remain, which could be addressed in a more developed study. For example, one question that remains slightly open is that of the impact of antiterrorist measures and/or of sanctuarisation on users of public space, particularly marginalised people, notably on their perception of public space and the activities they perform there. Researchers would also be welcome to assess the enforcement of sanctuarisation in a number of events, according to their scale or their type (festive, sportive, protests, street markets...) in a large comprehensive study, including dedicating particular attention to 'festive protests' such as the Pride. Future research could also address how Brussels becomes an 'eventful city' and what are the impacts of this on the right to the city. Additionally, it would be inter-

esting to see if and how sanctuarisation is enforced in other geographical contexts, for example in rural contexts or in cities of the world-system (semi-)peripheries. A city of the world-system core is indeed not the sole place where neoliberal capitalism, State, and their police are active in multiple forms of repression.

10. Conclusion

In this work, I have addressed the question of the impact of antiterrorism measures on the policing of events in public space in Brussels. I concentrated on two types of events, festive events and protests, which although they are quite different in nature, are policed along the same framework. Given the lack of analysis of such events policing locally, I have also briefly analysed this policing when it remained constant.

Using various methodologies, I have compared the recent evolution in time of the policing of these two types of events, by focusing on specific case-studies. Given their single characteristics (festive events with an entry fee and protests conducted by institutional actors), a range of other events were also mobilised to enrich the analysis. Hence, I addressed events gathering different volumes of audience, whereas the existing international scientific literature has mostly focused on mega-events.

These analyses point out the importance of security measures embedded in space, namely enforcing micro-scale borders, access control and circulations management. Such measures were already enforced for protests (and festive events with an entry fee) before the 2015-16 terrorist attacks under the “negotiated management of public space” policing framework. Actually, this framework of negotiated protest policing techniques is enforced in combination with tactics of restoring order, depending on the type of protest, as shown by global tendencies (reflected in Brussels with local variations).

It appears that antiterrorism is a relevant factor for the intensification of festive event policing, while this is not the case for protests. Moreover, the application of such measures has been generalised to all festive events after the attacks permanently, as what could be interpreted as permanent state of exception measures. Although they play a role of prevention and pre-emption of disorders and terrorist threat, these measures are fundamentally exclusive towards dissenting populations and Muslim and Arab populations. In addition, the latter are seen as “enemies from within”, which is a feeling that has been reinforced after the attacks.

These observations have led me to propose a tool of understanding of urban policing mechanisms: the concept of sanctuarisation. Understood as the temporary appropriation of a public place by political or commercial stakeholders during festive events and protests, enabling the protection from it has strong economical and political effects. They play mostly on the right to the city of marginalised and/or rebel populations, and the implications it has in terms of political rights. Under sanctuarisation, the latter are sold off against a supposed economic prosperity and selective liberty – not that this would really be a surprise. Indeed, in the light of this analysis, the police remains more than ever a force of protection and enforcement of the capitalism and the State, in their ideologies and natures.

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