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11. ‘Getting the Dialogue Started’: Crowd Management and Conflict Resolution—A Case Study

The Saint Paul University Crowd Management and Conflict Resolution Initiative had its genesis in the summer 2000. An ad hoc group met with the purpose of exploring an innovative approach to crowd management: one that would maintain public order in a non-violent manner while still protecting the democratic rights of citizens to protest and demonstrate lawfully and with passion. We held two developmental training sessions to test the validity of our approach. These sessions, along with Advisory council meetings, a myriad of phone calls, and two focus groups, constituted a Participatory Action Research Project. The participants’ feedback on the training sessions was overwhelmingly favourable, providing the impetus to move ahead on the project.

Richard L’Abbé, President of Med–Eng Systems Inc. at the time, asked the question that gave rise to our initiative: ‘Can you do anything about crowd control?’ Med–Eng was a local Ottawa company that developed and manufactured protective equipment for use in fields such as de-mining, bomb disposal and public order. L’Abbé perceived that there might be insufficient training available to security forces, particularly in certain parts of the world, with respect to crowd control. Furthermore, he wanted to avoid the potential misuse of equipment designed to protect security personnel—misuse that would result in police exerting excessive violence against legitimate protesters. He believed that Canada was a leader in crowd management and in the protection of democratic rights, and thought that an opportunity existed to develop new approaches and training in the field of crowd management. He challenged Saint Paul University to do something on the subject at a meeting in the Rector’s office on July 25, 2000. He offered to finance the first training session. Cynics among protest groups were critical of our accepting financing from Med–Eng. We knew L’Abbé’s company had much money to make with the escalating violence and growing need for protective police equipment and we were convinced that the Med–Eng President’s democratic and pacifist nature coincided with our values. We were not disappointed. We had full

academic and practical freedom to proceed as independent researchers on the question 'How might police develop more peaceful means of dealing with protest crowds?'

Vern Neufeld Redekop played a lead role in the development of this initiative. He was President of the Canadian Institute for Conflict Resolution (CICR), became Director of Program Development for Conflict Studies at Saint Paul University and, subsequently professor of conflict studies at Saint Paul. Redekop directed the protest crowd–police research. The University agreed to undertake the initiative and gave it a home within the Faculty of Human Sciences. Shirley Paré joined the initiative as coordinator and co-trainer, bringing her experience with government organizations and her knowledge in public administration into the project. We formed an advisory council to oversee the initiative, the goal of which was to support the Canadian government's dedication to public order and peace, at home and abroad. This advisory council consisted of representatives from Saint Paul University, the Canadian Police Community, Med–Eng Systems Inc. and eventually, members of the activist community.

We will begin this chapter with a description of the Community-Based Conflict Resolution methodology and philosophy used in the initial training workshops. We will then describe the two three-day workshops, our challenges and successes, which provided the foundation for our project and research. We tested our methodology in a mini-seminar, one evening long, to prepare for the protest at the G20 finance ministers meeting in Ottawa. After the G20, protesters and police assembled for an evening of storytelling and brainstorming. We will tell the story and present a detailed analysis of the lessons learned. The mini-seminar de-brief provided extensive data and leads into a section on lessons learned. Brief discussions on reconciliation and building trust, provide a vision and foundation for developing a process; process suggestions are included at the end of chapter thirteen. Our project concluded with two focus groups that reviewed our initial manuscript, the practical aspects of which are presented in the first part of chapter thirteen.

Community Based Conflict Resolution

From CICR, Vern Neufeld Redekop brought extensive experience using training as an intervention to deal with deep-rooted conflict. Shirley Paré was a graduate of both the Third Party Neutral Program and the Seminar Series on Intervening in Deep-Rooted Conflict.

Created in 1988 as a non-profit organization, the CICR has been involved in studying deep-rooted conflict in Canada and abroad, and has developed a unique program to help uncover the sources of deep-rooted conflict and begin the process of reconciliation. The CICR experience, and indeed history, has shown that lasting solutions to deep-rooted conflict come from within communities or among the individuals at the centre of the dispute. The CICR program approach, therefore, focuses on bringing together the different stakeholders in a neutral environment to examine the underlying issues in the deep-rooted conflict in a non-judgmental manner and to develop potential solutions. Using this methodology, the CICR has experienced considerable success in resolving conflict and finding solutions, both within Canada (e.g., Cops and Kids Program, Queensway-Carleton Hospital amalgamation and more recently in the northern community of Sioux Lookout), and internationally (e.g., in Taiwan, the former Yugoslavia, and in Rwanda).

The CICR uses a Community Based Conflict Resolution (CBCR) process based on the underlying principle that ‘in order to establish union or collaboration within a community, everyone must have access and understanding of the methods and principles used in conflict resolution.’ (Birt, 2001) Applying this principle to protester–police dynamics, it became critical that the same information be available to the protest crowds, the police, those who were targeted by the crowds (usually government officials) and bystanders, including the media. Our process would be based on the same principles as those developed by the CICR. We needed a practical, efficient, effective and sustainable way to reach all groups in the equation. Because we were dealing with this issue on a community basis, the process needed to be inclusive, barrier free and positively-centred so that it would respond to the needs of those involved. World-wide, there had been significant uncertainty, tension and violence associated with protesting crowds. These principles would help to ease the tension and, hopefully, reduce the violence in future demonstrations. Protests would return to the issues; they would become less about violence with the police.

A key process in Community-Based Conflict Resolution is ‘gathering,’ which is used in tandem with training as a positively-centred activity that is non-issue based. Gathering starts with a social mapping of all those who are part of a community or of all those implicated in a conflict. Based on this analytical work, people are gathered for an initial process—planning

meeting, training session or dialogue. After the initial analysis, a larger, open list is made of all those who should be invited. People are then contacted; the purpose of the initiative is explained; they are also told about others who are invited. In the process of gathering, we ask for the names of others who should be included to enhance the diversity of the group.

Community-Based Conflict Resolution (CBCR) is based on a number of principles. Robert P. Birt identified these in a speech on May 19, 1994 at the end of his three-year residency which was focused on developing a foundation for CBCR. He stated:

where dignity and respect exist, trust will follow ... and that these are the conditions for the forgiveness and healing necessary to bring about peace.

As a process it has no power, unless it is enabled by the human spirit and will. As a process it has no meaning, unless it can in turn empower its users with a sense of self determination and positive centred activity. It has no direction, unless it is motivated by an essence that transcends the barriers of doubt and touches much higher powers. Community-Based Conflict Resolution is at its fullest a peace making process. It's goal is: to bring from the chaos of conflict, order and the potentiality of peace. (Birt, 2001)

The positively-centered, inclusive gathering of CBCR combined with conflict resolution training produces resolution skills, a framework to deal with issues and, most of all, trust among community members.

We decided to apply the principles of Community Based Conflict Resolution to the crowd management domain. In our initiative we would gather participants from each part of the crowd system—protesters, police, targets, and bystanders. The variety of backgrounds, interests and experiences would reflect the communities from which the participants were gathered.

The First Training Session: November 31–December 2, 2002

After Richard L'Abbé's initial challenge, the first step was to secure a mandate to proceed, particularly from the policing community. The protest community is much less organized; it is difficult to know who actually 'represents' the protest community and, consequently, from whom to seek a mandate. An

ad hoc meeting was held at Saint Paul University on September 8, 2000. This meeting brought together people from the RCMP, Ottawa Police, the Canadian Forces (including a Military Chaplain committed to advancing reconciliation as a goal among chaplains), Med-Eng Systems Inc., and the University. It was decided to move ahead on a *Special Workshop: Crowd Control and Conflict Resolution* (later changed to 'Crowd Management') and an Advisory Council was appointed.

The Goal of the Workshop was 'to enhance the capacity of police and military, in conjunction with other members of society, to manage angry crowds in a conflict-resolving manner.' The objectives were:

1. To introduce conflict resolution approaches to those responsible for crowd control.
2. To provide a framework to analyze the reasons for crowd anger, violence and chaos.
3. To develop new creative possibilities for crowd control strategies and tactics.
4. To generate new understandings about crowd control.

The first workshop was also to pre-test and evaluate this new approach to crowd management, to see whether the above goal and objectives could be met. We directed the workshop towards operational police officers and tactical troop commanders, and included members of the RCMP, the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP), Metro Toronto Police, Ottawa Police Service and Department of National Defence (DND).

In keeping with our CBCR objective of working with a diverse group, other participants included selected representatives from the media and protestor/activist stakeholder groups. This was not easy in the beginning. Early concerns expressed by the police were that sharing with activists might compromise the security of police and their activities. Primarily, the needs and desires of the police drove the makeup of the pilot workshop as they felt they were the ones who had the responsibility to change the way they did their business. They were not convinced that activists could contribute to their knowledge of how to keep the peace. In the past, the purpose of police consultation with activists was largely to gather intelligence about the plans and build a strategy that would facilitate peaceful demonstrations. In response to our request for a diversity of participants, the police agreed to include activists they felt they could trust. Two of the activist participants

did not share this trust with the police and left the workshop early. Similarly, the police knew the media representatives invited. The media participants were restricted in what they could write and publish about the workshop. They could use the information from the workshop but not attribute it to the workshop or participants. Consequently, to attend a three day workshop without a good story at the end was of questionable value for their time. Many police officers wished to attend; however, we had limited capacity. We anticipated that future workshops could provide access to more officers. After the first session, the response from the police was so positive about the presence of protesters that we were advised to have a balanced group in the future. The initial resistance had vanished; even the demand for large numbers of police officers to get the training did not over-ride the importance of the diverse make up of participants. We felt that our process was working at a deeper level—police no longer had to have all the answers and no longer felt they were totally responsible to come up with the ‘right’ strategy. Of course, none of this was articulated as such and, in fact, it was and is never quite that simple where emotions and deep-rooted conflict are implicated. We knew that it was a start.

Based on theories of deep-rooted conflict (Redekop, 2002), the training would become an opportunity to work out differences and become a key conflict resolving process in itself. It would allow participants to relate deep-rooted conflict to their personal experiences so that insights would belong to them and the learning would be very personal.

The three-day training workshop opened with a process known as census. In this process people work in groups of 4 to gather information from group members. Individuals from each group rotate in such a way that everyone receives information from all the groups. The purpose of census is to establish a collaborative spirit, make everyone feel included, get information about the group for both group consciousness and a sense of who is there. It starts people thinking about certain themes and brings latent ideas to consciousness. It shows up unexpected areas of commonality and it is fun.

Census gets everyone talking early on. It builds trust as everyone shares personal information in small groups close enough to look into one another’s face. It demands collaboration. The census process creates a safe space in which participants move from a closed to the positive dynamic of an open community. It is effective in diffusing a complex community conflict where there is tension.

On the front of the census page we asked for name, role and leisure activity. The questions on the reverse were recorded anonymously and pertained to what was happening; in our case, they were related to crowd experiences. Participants recorded the information within their own groups and this was shared so that at the end there was a record of people's experiences and what challenges needed to be addressed.

The first day then dealt with deep-rooted conflict, mimetic theory and values through a combination of short presentations and interactive processes. The second day focused on conflict intensifiers, types of crowds, principles of neutrality; participants to try their hand at a conflict resolution role play. On the third day, participants worked in small groups on several protest crowd scenarios. They were encouraged to develop creative interventions. The final afternoon was devoted to planning follow-up actions.

The feedback from participants of the workshop was positive and there was overwhelming support for our process. Thankfully, the security representatives thought that there should be greater representation from the other stakeholder groups, particularly from protest and activist groups. They also believed that further development of the process was required for applicability to the operational environment. Participants suggested that the way to get support for the number of workshops that would be required for all police officers who wanted them was to interest the senior leaders of local police forces first.

The Second Workshop: Getting the Leaders Involved

As the Advisory Council deliberated on the next step, it became clear that if the approach and process were to catch on among the police, senior officers must get directly involved. Because of the approaching Summit of the Americas, all police concerned with public order were preoccupied so we decided to have the next workshop shortly after the Summit. At one meeting, representatives of the Advisory Council from the RCMP and Ottawa Police got out their cell phones and called their superiors; on the spot we were assured of significant representation, including the Deputy Chief of the Ottawa Police and a Superintendent from the RCMP. One of the most important successes in gathering is that people agree to participate when they know someone who is involved in the project. Once these notables agreed to attend it became easier to attract other community leaders.

The second workshop from May 6 to 8, 2001, was entitled 'Strategic Leaders' Seminar'. The sponsorship of the Solicitor General of Canada and the

Canadian Police Research Centre made this workshop possible. This time the Advisory Council agreed that we would gather leaders from all contributing communities. Participants included police leaders, community leaders associated with the issue and other stakeholder representatives. Gathering from the activist community was more difficult than we anticipated. One evening during the gathering process, we met with about fifteen activist representatives who were quite agitated about our project and were actively objecting to protesters becoming involved. We wanted to explain our objectives. This helped to ease the anxiety and several agreed to participate.

The Senior Leader's Seminar participants included an Anglican Bishop; local activists who had taken a lead role in organizing protest activities; police, including an RCMP Assistant Commissioner, a Superintendent, the local Deputy Chief, and representatives from Sureté du Québec, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Toronto police; military representatives including a Padre; media reps were a reporter for the Ottawa Citizen and a professor from the Carleton University School of Journalism; two people in leadership from Armour holdings came from the United States and a politician came from Saskatchewan.

We repeated the general format of the pilot workshop incorporating lessons learned and included an optional debriefing of the Quebec Summit of the Americas just recently held. A number of the participants had been in Quebec City—some on the side of the police and some on the side of the protesters. As we went around the circle, each told stories of what they encountered. Here are some examples.

- One protester told of tear gas going into the medical compound for protesters.
- A police officer responsible for tear gas talked about the inaccuracy of the tear gas launchers.
- A protester told about how the fence was turned into an object of creativity as some women threaded coloured pieces of cloth through the wires.
- A police officer talked of spending twelve hours straight in protective gear without being able to eat, drink or go to the washroom. He also talked of waves of different types of protest. All would be peaceful for hours and then in a few minutes a new group came to the space in front of him and started throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails.
- A protester talked of how a van she was riding in was attacked by a group of fellow-protesters.

- The story was told of a tense situation where parents of young protesters emerged from a bar where they had been waiting only to be confronted by police in riot gear. A police officer, sensitive to what was happening, removed his helmet to expose his face and immediately the tension dissipated.

Near the end of the evening it was observed that usually groups debrief a situation separately but this was much more meaningful.

As with the first workshop, the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Again, the police representatives endorsed and validated the participation of the other stakeholder groups, noting that even more participation from the protest community was valuable and necessary. They also encouraged further development for the operational environment.

After the Quebec Summit and the success of the first two workshops, the University decided to pursue the objective of providing support to the upcoming G8 Summit in Kananaskis in June 2002. As this initiative was proceeding over the summer and fall of 2001, Saint Paul University looked for an opportunity to test the developing crowd dynamics process that would provide further credibility for the process. At the same time, another application would further our research and progress the evolving paradigm.

The G20 Mini-Seminar: Phase Three

The Fall, 2001 G20 gathering of Finance Ministers in Ottawa provided an opportunity to apply and further test the new crowd dynamics paradigm. Insofar as time was too limited to 'do it right,' it was not a complete test of what might happen if the new paradigm was made operable. However, as it did lead to significant interpersonal exchanges and the development of new insights, it confirmed for us the need and potential for what we now call the Mutual Respect Paradigm of crowd dynamics as a model to guide the planning, actions and follow-up to major international events that attract huge demonstrating crowds.

The G20 Summit of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank originally planned to be held in the Indian capital of New Delhi fell victim to the events of September 11, 2001. Canada and then Finance Minister Paul Martin agreed to host the mid-November (16th to 18th) meeting just one month before it was to take place, and chose Ottawa as the location. On the

evening of November 4, we agreed to hold a mini-seminar on November 8, the latest possible date before the G20. We scrambled to gather a balanced group for the event. In the end, there were 28 participants. Of these, 13 were police, 7 were from the activist community, 5 were from government and there were 3 'bystanders.'

We decided to start with dinner and work through the evening. The process started with small mixed groups of four dining together over a set of questions designed to get them talking about the issues of peaceful protest—a mini census. During the seminar, we presented key aspects of the 'Collaborative Crowd Dynamics Paradigm' (as we called it then) and provided opportunity for dialogue. At the conclusion of the November 8 mini-seminar, the participants requested a debrief with the same people. The date was set for November 27, however, this became a public gathering so the debrief with participants was held on the evening of December 4th.

The G20 Summit

The first evening of the summit, Friday November 16, started out peaceful enough. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 on the World Trade Centre in New York resulted not only in a change of venue for the Summit but also, no doubt, contributed to a strong police presence among the crowds in Ottawa during the event. There was no fence, only moveable bicycle stands were used as a barrier around the government conference centre. Activists were pleasantly surprised to see that they were given access to the space surrounding the War Memorial, letting them come closer to the site of the Summit than they anticipated. Later in the evening, a handful of demonstrators turned violent, smashing the window of a McDonalds outlet.

That action triggered a change in operational plans on the part of the police for Saturday. It meant that some of the tactical troops were mobilized in the protective gear that protesters find intimidating. A number of factors increased tensions, leading to circumstances in which some demonstrators got hurt. Police arrested fifty-three people. The experiences of those directly involved and those who witnessed events resulted in deep emotions of hurt, anger and indignation. These negative emotions were apparently generated by a number of events.

- Police responded to a 'single incident' of violence by mobilizing the tactical troops.
- The prearranged path of a protest march had been blocked.

- A police dog got loose and attacked protesters.
- A protesting Quaker grandmother was hit in the face by a police officer.
- There were some violent arrests.

The trust that had been built in the activist community from our workshops had been damaged.

In response to these feelings, the Ottawa Police Services Board agreed to hear five-minute testimonials on November 26. Nearly twenty people spoke—many were well established members of the community. At the end of that meeting, it was announced that the following evening there would be a meeting of police and protesters at Saint Paul University. This error in communication resulted in the planned debrief meeting for participants of the November 8th mini-seminar being advertised on local radio. Rather than turn people away, the University chose to open its doors. Some 80 mostly local citizens and fourteen police attended the evening public meeting of November 27th. We will first provide an overview of the Public Meeting, follow with a summary of the G20 mini-seminar debrief then articulate some lessons learned.

The Public Meeting

The evening started at 7:00 pm with a presentation of a framework for discussion. There was virtually no trust so there was no possibility for any smaller sub-processes. Many demonstrators and a few bystanders told their stories and offered their interpretation of events. Periodically we created space for police perspectives. The stories were mostly from angry activists and it was a challenge to maintain the neutrality of the process; eventually, participants were challenged to not only tell their stories but to come up with constructive suggestions that could be recorded on flip charts. All told, there were some 93 suggestions for steps towards creating peaceful crowd dynamics in Ottawa in the future. These suggestions provided real value for the meeting.

The evening was emotional, cathartic for some and frustrating for others who were clearly in need of meaningful resolution. One professional psychologist in the audience thought that there was evidence of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among both activists and police who spoke. Protesters were reined in from violence by other protesters in the audience so that while there were many angry and some vicious comments, there

was no destructive violence. One young police officer responded to angry protesters with a catch in his voice saying that he had dedicated his life to his community and he was surprised and saddened to learn that his contribution to a peaceful democracy was viewed with so much hate and criticism. We wish to emphasize that people who spoke did so for themselves and from their own perspective. The comments may or may not have been representative of the stakeholder communities to which they belonged.

We work to resolve deep-rooted conflict within communities. It is not our purpose to air or deal with particular grievances. Nonetheless, the comments and suggestions made on November 27 raised a number of issues and questions that are important for the further development of a new paradigm for protest crowds–police dynamics. We have grouped the public meeting suggestions according to the following topics:

1. Purpose of demonstrations;
2. Pre-event dialogue between police and activist communities;
3. Community-based policing concept extended to demonstrations and protests;
4. Arrest process;
5. Humanizing and stereotyping;
6. Reconciliation; and
7. Rebuilding trust.

The purpose of demonstrations

Activists see themselves, among other more obvious and well-stated objectives, as supporting protests in Third World countries where respect for freedom of expression is not as high. Since some demonstrators have significant experience and insight about issues affecting both Canadians as well as others around the world, the question is what structures, mechanisms and attitudes would allow government to hear what they have to say. Further to that, what is the role of the police in expediting the communication process?

Pre-event consultations between police and activist communities

Pre-event consultations have been used for several years with excellent results in the Ottawa community. There are more than 600 demonstrations each year in the capital and most are without incident. Most of these are on a small scale. When it comes to major international summits a number of issues emerge from the G20 experience:

1. Ongoing good relationships need to be fostered.
2. If either side has had experiences that reduce trust, there must be a safe forum to work through the issues.
3. The larger and more complex the event, the longer the desired lead-time and the more preparatory consultations are necessary.
4. For a new collaborative paradigm to emerge, dialogue about motivation, roles, broad issues, goals and potential scenarios needs to take place. This goes beyond consultations about logistics and beyond simply 'communicating' with the other.
5. The processes of pre-event dialogue and intelligence gathering must be clearly differentiated.
6. Some pre-event issues that warrant further discussion and work include:
 - The need for clear and transparent ground rules for demonstrations that are publicly negotiated among all stakeholder communities. This should include a frank discussion of tactics used by both police and activists and their consequences.
 - Police have a responsibility to communicate which actions and tactics will result in a police response and possible detainment or arrest.
 - A focus for further discussion is the impact of sounds and music to create a mood. For example, some drumming sounds are soothing and others energizing. One protestor suggested that police beating on shields energized demonstrators and, in itself, escalated violence.
 - Activists carrying potential weapons such as mirrors which could be used as projectiles or to reflect the sun and impair sight should be aware that they could be considered to be impeding police responsibilities and, consequently, they could be detained. Even if their intentions are honourable, they may be easily misinterpreted, making the risk to the security of the event unacceptable to police.

Community based policing concept extended to demonstrations and protests

The concept of setting up and using a collaborative, community approach to policing has been extremely successful in Ottawa. Several examples are indicative that this success can be extended to crowd dynamics.

- Ottawa's branch of the organization, Non-Violent Peace Force, reported incidents at the G20 of surrounding angry or vulnerable protesters to

inhibit the violence erupting or to stop what they saw as unwarranted aggression on the part of police.

- In case there are incidents in which activists feel unjustly treated by police, a variety of conciliatory processes could be put into place to supplement the public complaints system that tends to be cumbersome, time-consuming and adversarial in nature.
- Processes could also be put in place to mobilize the public as bystanders to reduce violence all around.
- A neutral body could be given a mandate to observe crowd dynamics, receive reports from activists and make a report after the event.
- Guidelines could be agreed upon to keep demonstrations away from vulnerable areas such as Ottawa's Byward Market.
- Plans could be agreed upon whereby non-violent protesters can dissociate themselves from violence. This includes a discussion of the meaning of 'red zones.'
- Self policing and marshalling within groups of demonstrators is to be encouraged and supported by police.

Arrest Process

Treating those arrested with dignity and respect is important. There is a need to publish clear and transparent guidelines for the arrest process to clarify for the protestors what they should expect. Police need to make distinctions between protestors' processes like 'going limp' which is a tactic in non-violent civil disobedience and hostile belligerent behaviour. At the very least, the following are important issues worth further discussion:

- How to develop a common understanding of behaviour that could result in arrest;
- How to make the process of arrest more transparent;
- Who would be acceptable professional, neutral witnesses to the arrest process; and
- How to ensure that those arrested are provided the opportunity to phone their legal counsel.

Humanizing and Stereotyping

The propensity of people in conflict to stereotype the opponent has several negative consequences. Earlier parts of this book explore the concept of stereotyping and, at the public meeting, it was apparent that stereotyping

contributed to aggression on both sides. Bringing a personal, human dimension to each side of the crowd dynamic has potential to add clarity and an enhanced perception of fairness to the process. Some of the suggestions include:

- identify all police officers with clearly visible numbers, (this is still an issue—it was a problem at the UK G20 summit in April 2009)
- identify protesters wearing balaclavas,
- humanize police officers,
- recognize humanity of all, and
- ask police to imagine if one of the protesters going through the line was one of their ‘own.’

Several comments at the public meeting reflected support for the process:

- the effort to put together the public meeting on short notice spoke well of the legitimacy of the process;
- the meeting was a good gesture; and
- it is important that ‘intervention activities’ like this not be supported financially by the police. In fact, it was a voluntary activity by the authors and the university.

The G20 Mini-Seminar De-brief

On December 4, we had a debrief meeting with the group from our G20 mini-seminar. Several participants from the mini-seminar were absent, notably the government representatives. We asked participants to pose questions they would like to ask in the wake of the G20 demonstrations in Ottawa. They asked many questions, each person honestly wanting to understand the dynamics of what they found to be baffling. What went wrong? The questions themselves revealed the need for on-going dialogue.

Questions Raised at the De-brief of December 4

For the activists present, there was a clear focus on planning for the event and confusion on how much latitude police on the spot have regarding their use of force. There were questions concerning:

- the authority to do what was done in terms of ‘use of force’ options,
- the chain of command for decisions seemingly made on the spot,
- who decides on security zones, and
- will security zones be a military decision for the G8 in Kananaskis?.

The police present looked for more organization among those in the activist community. There were questions about:

- how to get protesters involved in the planning?
- do protesters agendas change with the forum of the event?
- is it possible to have a mechanism to develop guidelines for peaceful protest?
- how police can protect international protesters?
- how best to give the benefit of police expertise to the crowds?
- what education do police need from the point of view of protesters? and
- is more general knowledge needed on both sides?

Additionally, there was much interest and seemingly some confusion about the use of violence:

- what are anarchists and hard line protesters trying to achieve through violence?
- why are they violent (it destroys the effectiveness of peaceful demonstrators)?
- why are peaceful protesters not more forceful in condemning violence of others? and
- why do activists scale barricades (undermines police trust of protesters)?

From a government representative:

- why do protesters think they deserve a seat at the table when they are not elected?
- whom do they represent? and
- what is their constituency?

People from each side were given a chance to respond. One police officer who was responsible for the path of the march told about how they made their preparations at night. He mentioned that he should have walked the whole route himself at the end to be sure it was done right—it wasn't and somebody had mistakenly put barriers up at the wrong place to block the route. Police also mentioned that because it was such a big event organized at the last minute it was difficult to fully coordinate police coming from a number of different police services.

During the G20 intervention, we showed once again that the conflict resolution process is indeed applicable to the issue of protest crowd–police dynamics. The importance of a neutral intervention is crucial to the process of re-creating a non-violent, peaceful demonstration that is both honourable and respectful of our democracy.

What did we Learn about Protest Crowd–Police Dynamics Research?

First, our involvement in the process revealed a deep-rooted conflict that has developed involving activists, police, and government. It is characterized by distrust, mimetic structures of entrenchment, deep-feelings, and very different perceptions and interpretations of the same events. If anything, it has deepened our conviction that conflict-resolving dialogue processes will be instructive in furthering the understanding of protest crowd–police dynamics that could lead to a new paradigm within democracies. A positively centered process led by a neutral third party can transform deep-rooted conflict.

Second, we have learned that a three-day process is a minimum needed to transform relationships, develop understandings about a new paradigm and generate helpful scenarios. One of the members of the advisory council openly mused about whether more harm than good came of having a mini-seminar of only one evening. Both sides were willing to give the other a chance but neither had the confidence to allow small infractions to go unnoticed. One small infraction led to many more larger ones until chaos reigned. It is clear to us that we have to persevere; it takes so little to raise doubt and questions.

Third, notwithstanding the need for more time, protest crowds and police can make significant changes through any face-to-face encounter in a positively centered process. After the mini-seminar, police communicators informed us that they were reframing their press releases because of new understandings. After the G20 protests and resulting aftermath were over, police planners said that they had changed their operational plans because of what they had learned.

Fourth, we recognized that stereotypes are misleading. One of the ‘youth dressed in black’ who would have been marked as a violent troublemaker disclosed that he worked for a high-tech firm and had a high security clearance; he also felt strongly about global issues and the demonstration. In historical understandings of protest crowds, he would have been stereotyped ‘riff-raff.’

Fifth, we learned that people act in ways that make sense within their own frame of reference. For example, on the Saturday morning of the demonstration, the Black Bloc had promised the pregnant mothers that they would do nothing to incite violence. Demonstrators worked on the presumption that everything would be peaceful. The violent incident at McDonalds the night before triggered among the police a contingency plan B that called for the deployment of tactical troops making it unsafe for families. Violence is returned by violence with interest.

Sixth, we learned to flow with the process. When the planned debrief for former participants turned into a public event, our temptation was to cancel everything. We decided canceling would do more harm than good and that the best decision was to welcome all who came. The many positive suggestions generated and the large number of people who came forward with their names and coordinates at the end showed that we had indeed made a difference in attitudes at least towards our process.

Seventh, we learned that violence in the course of a demonstration can be traumatizing and cause a deep-rooted conflict to surface. Reconciliation is not easy particularly since there are structural constraints on apologies. Nevertheless, in a safe confidential environment, the kind of communication and gestures of understanding needed for reconciliation are possible.

The Aftermath to the G20 Demonstrations

Since the incidents between the police and citizens at the G20 demonstrations, citizens have chosen to deal with their perceptions of wrongdoing by the police in two ways. First, because of some incidents, a group of Ottawa citizens organized a 'Citizens Panel on Policing and the Community.' They held public meetings in late February. The Citizens Panel listened to the stories of many people affected by the events of that day. They hoped to help us all understand what happened on the streets of Ottawa, and to make recommendations on ways to improve relationships between police and the community in the future. After considering the submissions, the Panel published a report. Secondly, some individuals have decided to pursue the formal process to lodge a complaint against police. Each of these initiatives is important to clarify just what happened at the demonstration and to hold accountable anyone responsible for wrongdoing.

Additionally, it will be important to rebuild the trust and to reconcile the anger and entrenchment between protestors and police. Until those who feel betrayed regain their capacity for trust, they will find it difficult to move forward. The formal complaints process may provide some relief; however, it is time consuming and adversarial in nature. As one person at the public meeting said, feelings are facts—we need to recognize that these feelings are serious even if the legal facts do not support them in the formal process. Those involved need to deal with negative emotions adequately or they will continue to affect future events.

Often the people with the greatest tendency toward violence, those categorized as the ‘violent two per cent,’ are marginalized young people who have themselves been severely victimized. They often feel that they have no voice; that no one has been listening to their concerns. If ways could be found to give them an effective voice as part of the humanizing process, their own perceived need for violence would possibly be diminished.

The Advisory Council was convinced that the Crowd Management and Conflict Resolution Initiative offered significant potential as an approach to public order that could conceivably reduce the increasing level of violence observed at recent anti-globalization demonstrations. One of the principal objectives of this initiative was the development of enhanced awareness amongst police, protesters, the media, politicians, government officials and citizens at large of ways to de-escalate conflict when crowds gather.

Reconciliation

The process of reconciliation has been touched on only briefly in this book. To provide some background for understanding the G20 discussion, it is helpful to note that reconciliation involves emotions and a recognition of the humanity and validity of the perceptions of the ‘other.’ The process of reconciliation has several steps; it is sometimes sequential, sometimes iterative, it can be circuitous or sometimes quite simple and quick. It requires commitment from both sides in the conflict. There must be an acknowledgement of the conflict (name the demon), an openness to see the human face of the ‘other,’ and some teaching so both sides learn that reconciliation is a good thing and can imagine how it could happen. The Graduated Reciprocal Initiatives of Tension Reduction (GRIT), an

interactive dance of communication, then follows. Each side needs to see signals of remorse and forgiveness; they need opportunity to rethink their perceptions, integrating new truths, understanding and values. It is helpful to reframe the experience and discover a higher perception. Then there needs to be room for ritual and a process to re-establish the relationships, room for healing to establish new emotional pathways and room for re-creating a new way of being together including structure, norms, laws, story and teaching.

The activists at the G20 public meeting put great emphasis on the importance of apology and admission of wrong-doing on the part of police as a first step in the reconciliation process. There are constraints imposed by the legal and adversarial nature of the public complaints process that make it difficult or impossible for police to apologize outside of that formal process. Reconciliation outside of the formal process holds earlier and more effective promise. Some of those at the public meeting showed good understanding of the process. For example, the following points could all contribute to restoration of previously good relationships:

- listen to each other,
- be willing to break the tension,
- all sides agree to one thing about which to let guard down a little,
- remove ‘arms’ on both sides,
- agree on tactical de-escalators to be used during demonstrations,
- all sides tell the truth.

Rebuilding Trust

Rebuilding trust has also been only touched upon briefly in the book. An integral part of reconciliation is to rebuild trust where it has been broken. Most of us know very easily when we trust and when we do not. We sometimes lack the vocabulary to talk about what constitutes trust and just how it is built and how it is broken. Consequently, what surfaces when trust is broken is often anger and frustration. Similarly, we know when we have been betrayed yet many of us find it difficult to deal with betrayal in a productive way. Those who have experienced betrayal and recovered are better equipped to deal with it a second time. Others who have never fully recovered can be psychologically damaged by a second betrayal or even the perception of one. Experiencing a major betrayal is like experiencing a death—we have feelings of loss of trust in others and maybe feelings of loss of trust in ourselves.

The public meeting allowed for an airing of many grievances against police originating at the G20 demonstrations and, as such, started the recovery process. It may not have been the process of choice at the time, nonetheless it was a beginning and a good one. Hearing the views of the ‘other side’ provided the information that can eventually allow those who feel betrayed to reframe the experience, forgive and move on. The protagonists deserve support from the community to do this. The activists and others at the public meeting asked for relationships with integrity. This demands open communication about changes in plans and expectations along the way. If a pre-demonstration consultation has resulted in a given set of shared expectations and if unexpected events necessitate a change in strategy, operations and tactics along the way, the more this is communicated with an explanation, the better.

Focus Groups

After the G-20 event, we organized two focus groups to involve participants from our various seminars to have a voice in the shaping of a document that was to give expression to the emerging new paradigm. Their important contributions helped shape the original manuscript. Much of chapter thirteen comes from the original text and formed the manuscript that underwent significant scrutiny by the focus groups.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have presented an account of some of the experiences that led us to the conclusion that a new paradigm is both needed and available when it comes to relationships between protesters and police at a primary level and between these groups and media, bystanders and targets at a secondary level. This realization functioned heuristically as we did the research on the histories of protest, crowds and policing in Part One. It became evident as we witnessed true dialogue occurring between those from the policing and protest communities, that it was possible to generate mimetic structures of blessing within this relational system. As we listened to the creative ways police and protesters developed scenarios, it became clear to us that given the chance people can work together to develop possibilities that transcend individual imaginations. In the next chapter, a number who participated in these processes will give their reflections.