Redekop, Vern Neufeld, and Shirley Paré. "Protest Crowd–Police Dynamics." *Beyond Control: A Mutual Respect Approach to Protest Crowd–Police Relations*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2010. 9–10. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781849660907.part-001>>.

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PART ONE

Protest Crowd–Police Dynamics

Overview of Part One

Our first chapter examines what is at stake in protest crowd–police dynamics; namely, the character of the society in which they take place. In chapter two, we trace the evolution of protest crowds over the last two centuries. This entails separate analyses of protest and of crowds, including how perceptions of each have changed through time. This prepares us for an examination of the role of emotions in crowd dynamics in the chapter three. Chapter four introduces the police, providing a history of protest policing as it evolved with the Metropolitan Police of London, showing a convergence of policing trends in established democracies, and delving into some of the ethical issues raised by protest policing. We then take a theoretical step back from the immediate scene of protest in chapter five as we consider scapegoating and hegemonic structures as ways of comprehending a sense of ‘otherness’ in relational systems. In chapter six we introduce the remaining groups with a stake in protest crowd–police dynamics: targets of protest, bystanders and media. Chapter seven explores reciprocal violence drawing on the mimetic (imitation) theory of French thinker René Girard and chapter eight develops the concept of mutual blessing as it shows how a relational system can be structured so that the parties enhance each other’s well-being. The combination of historical inquiry, introduction of stakeholders, and theoretical background will come together in chapter nine as we discuss three different paradigms of protester–police dynamics. These three paradigms will be presented as building on one another, with each successive paradigm representing another level of consciousness and a greater capacity to deal with complexity ending with the Mutual Respect paradigm or approach. Chapter ten looks at the relationships among protest crowds, police, and political leaders, situating the Mutual Respect approach within the context of evolving forms of democracy.