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Introduction

The Policing of Protest in Western Democracies

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One specific aspect of state response to political dissent is the policing of protest, which we define as the police handling of protest events—a more neutral description for what protesters usually refer to as "repression" and the state as "law and order." Although the repression variable has been included in several models on the preconditions for collective action (among others, Tilly, 1978, in particular 101–6; Skocpol, 1979; McAdam, 1982), empirical research on the relationship between police and protesters in Western democracies is still rare. There is, therefore, a significant gap to be filled in the literature with comparative studies on protest and policing. Moreover, protest policing is a particularly relevant issue for a thorough understanding of the relationship between social movements and the state: "Police may be conceived as 'street-level bureaucrats' who 'represent' government to people" (Lipsky, 1970, 1).

Police intervention has, indeed, a strong impact on protesters' perceptions of the state reaction to them (della Porta, 1995). Waves of protest, in turn, have important effects on the police, as Jane Morgan (1987) observed in her historical research on the police in Great Britain. Protest policing would appear to be, in fact, a key issue for the professional self-definition of the police. For the process of modernization and professionalization of European police forces in the nineteenth century, it was of decisive importance that the police should become the principal agency responsible for safeguarding internal security and public order, thus marginalizing the military in this role. As the example of postwar Germany illustrates, the way in which the police deal with protest in contemporary democratic societies seems to be a significant, if not dominant, aspect of their self-image (Winter, in this volume). The

importance of these reciprocal repercussions highlights the need for an in-depth study of protest policing in a comparative perspective.

This need is addressed by the chapters in this volume, which are revised versions of contributions to an international conference on the theme "The Policing of Mass Demonstrations in Contemporary Democracies" organized by the Robert Schuman Center of the European University Institute in Florence in October 1995.[1] In the following, we shall attempt to locate the contributions to this volume within the framework of the social science literature related to the topic; at the same time, we shall propose some hypotheses on the origins, development, and consequences of different models of police protest control. Part I presents a description of the long-term national styles and recent developments in protest policing before discussing in a comparative perspective the hypotheses emerging from the studies collected in this volume on the significant historical cross-national differences in protest policing and on the recent trend toward a "softer" and more tolerant attitude in Europe. In Part II, we propose a model for explaining protest policing styles. Drawing on the research presented and on the literature on state responses to protest, we illustrate our hypothesis that protest policing is determined on a first level by (*a*) the organizational features of the police, (*b*) the configuration of political power, (*c*) public opinion, (*d*) the police occupational culture, and (*e*) the interaction with protesters. All of these influences are filtered, on a second level, by (*f*) police knowledge, defined as the police's perception of external reality, which shapes the concrete policing of protest on the ground. We also discuss the effects of the most recent trends in protest policing, as they emerged from the research of our contributors on the fate of social movements.

Trends and Cycles in the Evolution of Protest Policing

In order to reflect on the consequences of protest policing, we need to understand how the policing of protest varies: How can different ways of policing protest be characterized? Which cross-national differences can be identified? How did they evolve over time? Pertinent to a characterization of different ways of policing protests are the suggestions in social movement literature on the classification of the forms and nature of state control. Gary T. Marx (1979) distinguished repressive actions according to their specific aims: for instance, the creation of an unfavorable public image; information gathering; restriction of a movement's resources and limitation of its facilities; derecruitment of activists; destruction of leaders; fueling of internal conflicts;

encouragement of conflicts between groups; sabotage of particular actions. Charles Tilly's typology (1978, 106–15) classified political regimes on the basis of the degree of repression and "facilitation" they manifest toward various collective actors and actions.

Police studies formulated a series of typologies about police styles in order to characterize the intention and impact of different ways of policing. For instance, police interventions have been distinguished as oriented toward mediation, separation, coercion, or counseling (Bayley, 1986); styles of social control such as the penal style, the conciliatory style, the therapeutic style, and the compensatory style (Black, 1980, 130–32); police officers as professionals, reciprocators, enforcers, and avoiders (Muir, 1977); police tactics such as fire-brigade policing, local intelligence policing, and community policing (Baldwin and Kinsey, 1982).

Research on state building and democracy indicates the existence of different national styles for dealing with challengers. States with an equilibrium of power among the different social classes (particularly among the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the bourgeoisie), first-comer nation-states, and small states facing strong competition in the international markets developed integrative styles, while the other states tended to be exclusive (see, for instance, Marks, 1989; Kriesi et al., 1995). Moreover, experiences with authoritarian regimes tend to have long-lasting consequences on police style (see Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, and Reiter, in this volume).

Drawing on these various approaches, it is possible to develop more specific and detailed categories for the study of protest policing. Some relevant dimensions are presented in figure 1 (see also della Porta, 1995). A combination of these dimensions describes the protest policing style (understood as a subcategory of police style) employed by the police forces at protest events. For instance, police who repress a large number of protest groups, prohibit a wide range of protest activities, and intervene with a high degree of force are employing a diffused, repressive, and "brutal" protest policing style.[2]

With regard to traditional police styles, the "civilized" British "bobby"—unarmed, integrated in the community, and more or less autonomous from political power—has been contrasted with the militarized continental police, who live in barracks and are dependent on political power. Already in the nineteenth century, the London Metropolitan Police were viewed by the liberal press on the continent as an example of what a police force should be. For instance, an article published in the German illustrated journal *Die Gartenlaube* in 1878 on "the blue men of London" started, as any article on the London police in a German illustrated journal might have a hundred years

- "brutal" versus "soft"
  referring to the degree of force used
- repressive versus tolerant
  referring to the number of prohibited behaviors
- diffused versus selective
  referring to the number of repressed groups
- illegal versus legal
  referring to police respect of the law
- reactive versus preventive
  referring to the "timing" of police intervention
- confrontational versus consensual
  referring to the degree of communication with the demonstrators
- rigid versus flexible
  referring to the degree of "adaptability"
- formal versus informal
  referring to the degree of formalization of the rules of the game
- professional versus artisanal
  referring to the degree of "preparation"

Fig. 1. Variables relevant in order to define styles of "protest policing"

later, with the cliché of the friendly bobby giving directions to a foreign tourist (Katscher, 1878). It also noted the traditional "low-profile response" of the London police and their positive relationship with the public. Particular emphasis was placed on the accountability of every policeman, which assured that neither the single bobby nor the London police force as a whole was a threat to individual or collective liberty. Two lines of argument were generally used to explain these characteristics of the English police, as in the case of this article in *Die Gartenlaube*: on the one hand, the common-law tradition in England in contrast with the Roman law tradition on the continent and, on the other hand, the origins of the English police in the tradition of community policing. As Robert Reiner shows in his contribution to this volume, however, "the ideal British police model was not a reflection of some natural, in-built harmony or order in British society and culture." On the contrary, pioneers of the British police tradition "encouraged a low-profile, legalistic, minimal force strategy *because of*, not despite, the bitter political protests and acute social divisions of early nineteenth-century Britain."

On the European continent the countermodel to this strategy was formed by the French tradition of a "king's police," that is, a state police dependent on and under strict control of the central government, charged with a very wide range of tasks, and originally standing as a synonym for the interior state administration. At the same time, the French example served as a model for the police forces in other European countries and was drawn upon during debates on the institution of the London Metropolitan Police as a scarecrow to warn against the liberticidal aspects of this type of law enforcement (Bunyan, 1977, 63).

Myths aside, there do in fact appear to be visible differences between the record of the English police and the continental police forces in the field of protest policing in relation to the "old" challengers, that is, the democratic and labor movements. On the continent, police action against challengers seemed to aim at defending not only a general system of power, but a concrete government. If combined, as was often the case, with a weak respect for civil rights, the consequences of this modality for the policing of protest are easily imaginable. The protest policing styles traditionally dominant on the continent were more "brutal," more repressive, more confrontational, and more rigid than in England.

It should be noted, however, that significant differences also existed within the overall framework of the continental police systems, both over time and between countries, stretching from the French police of the Third Republic to the police system of National Socialist Germany.[3] After World War II, differences continued to exist on the continent. Latin police styles, based on the unconstrained use of force, were distinguished from the Central European style, characterized by respect for the *Rechtsstaat* (constitutional state). A comparison of Italy and Germany from the 1960s to the 1990s (della Porta, 1995, chap. 3) described the Italian protest policing style during this thirty-year period as more "brutal," more diffused, more illegal, more informal, and more artisanal than the German style.

For the decades since the 1960s, the studies collected in this volume point to a progressive assimilation of the different models of European policing, including protest policing. In Great Britain, a "militarization" thesis developed, based on the premise that the British police were moving toward the militarized, continental model in the control of public order. The riots in several British cities at the beginning of the 1980s, as well as the policing of the miners' strike later on, have been met with a "tougher" policing (Jefferson, 1990)—

although the availability of legal and technological resources for paramilitary intervention does not automatically mean that these resources are actually implemented (Waddington, 1994b).

On the "continent," a contrary trend was singled out. Connecting police professional culture with the main frames about protest policing in Germany, Martin Winter's (1991) analysis of specialized police journals during the 1960–90 period shows a shift toward a growing acceptance of forms of direct action. Winter argues that the debate on the military- versus the civil-oriented character of the police overlapped in Germany with the debate on protest strategy, with the traditionalists claiming the need for a hard line against the "anarchists" in order to "state an example" and the reformists—among whom the reform-oriented police trade union—defending a "soft approach." Although prior to 1968 demonstrations were largely identified with "Störung der öffentlichen Ordnung" (disturbing public order) and the potentially dangerous "crowds" had to be controlled in a paramilitary way, in the 1970s the reformist *Neue Linie* inside the police instead recognized demonstration as a basic right. After some rollbacks during the period of terrorism and the antinuclear campaign, the debate was dominated from 1985 on by the implications of the Brokdorf decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court. This judgment stated that "the right to demonstrate must be protected," thus a *Bürgerpolizei* conception now tends to prevail.

Interpreted as parallel movements, the convergent trends in England and Germany seem to confirm the progressive assimilation of the different styles of European protest policing observed earlier. Over time, cross-national differences between the European countries seem to have diminished. The research of the contributors to this volume on protest policing in England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain (but also the United States) brought forth similar conclusions.[4] A general trend emerges regarding protest policing styles, which, on the basis of the variables presented in figure 1, can be defined as "soft," tolerant, selective, legal, preventive, consensual, flexible, and professional.

On the basis of the research presented in this volume, in fact, the three most significant tactical tendencies characterizing protest policing in the 1990s appear to be (*a*) underenforcement of the law; (*b*) the search to negotiate; (*c*) large-scale collection of information. First, the strategy used during the 1980s and up to the present appears to be dominated by the attempt to avoid coercive intervention as much as possible. Lawbreaking, which is implicit in several forms of protest, tends to be tolerated by the police. Law enforcement is usually considered as less important than peacekeeping. This implies a considerable departure from protest policing in the 1960s and 1970s, when attempts to stop unauthorized demonstrations and a law-and-order attitude in the face of the "limited rule-breaking" tactic used by the new movements maneuvered the police repeatedly into "no-win" situations.

Second, in order to avoid disorder, complicated procedures of negotiation emerged. This tendency is not new. For the Germany of the 1960s, Martin Winter notes that, following public criticism of the "hard line" adopted by the police, public relations efforts were increased and the support of police psychologists was institutionalized. Other research indicates an increasing formalization of bargaining techniques. For the United States, McPhail, Schweingruber, and McCarthy document in this volume the sharp contrast between the general practices of protest policing in the 1960s, characterized by escalated force, and those of the 1980s and 1990s, characterized by negotiated management, which found significant expression in the development of a protest permit system. In his study of the London police, P. A. J. Waddington observed: "The principal method of securing compliance was through negotiation with the organizer of the protest" (1994b, 69). In the course of his research, Waddington noted a considerable bureaucratization and formalization of the entire procedure, with the effect of reinforcing obedience to the law. Without matching the level of bureaucratization of the British case, other countries, including France, Germany, and Switzerland, have witnessed the growing role of police officers responsible for "public relations," acting as mediators between demonstrators and the forces of order.

Third, the collection of information has received substantial attention by the police. The use of intelligence in the control of protesters is not a new trend. In his book on the "Red Squads," the specialized units employed against subversion that proliferated in American cities, Frank Donner (1990) suggests that there was a shift during the 1930s from traditional interventionist practices to "intelligence," that is, information gathering and surveillance, including the compilation of files and their aggressive use to damage the protesters. The role of the Red Squads was strengthened in the 1960s, when the FBI was thwarted by its own old conception of the left as "communists" and by millions of dossiers of old—or dead—radicals. Technological advances allowed for an increasing level of control.[5] In more recent times too, the availability of new techniques, together with growing professionalization, has been reflected in an ever-increasing attention to the collection of information—as may be seen, for instance, in the control of soccer crowds (see della Porta and De Biasi, in this volume).

If this seems to be the common general trend, both in Great Britain and in continental Europe, protest policing within any given country is *selective*, with a different treatment for different social groups, and in some cases "antago-

nistic" protest policing styles remain manifest. Our research, in fact, indicates the contemporary presence of diverse protest policing styles, implemented in different situations and directed toward different actors. For France, Fillieule and Jobard in this volume describe a paternalistic model of intervention (based on a "soft" management of violent demonstrations). In the case of the farmers' demonstrations, in particular, both tactical and political necessities have often seemed to push the police toward tolerating certain episodes of violence. In other instances, however, the French police have shown an antagonistic attitude, resorting to a repressive policing style. Within the general trend toward a more tolerant style, della Porta singles out four different models of protest policing for Italy: a model of cooperation, based on collaboration between the police force and demonstrators, and an inconspicuous police presence; a model of negotiation, based on a more active police presence with the objective of mediating between the demonstrators and "nondemonstrators" who are said to suffer the disruptive effects of protests; a model of ritualistic standoff, based on a more "aggressive" police presence, but often at a distance; and a model of total control, based on a massive presence and close involvement of the police forces.

Although the general trends described can be observed in all countries under review, some differences remain visible in a cross-national comparison. The very terms of the British debate on "militarization" suggest that the civilian character of the "bobby" is more deeply rooted than critics tend to concede. With respect to underenforcement of the law, the degree of toleration of lawbreaking appears to be higher in countries such as Italy and France, where the discretionary power of the police is greater, than in a country such as Germany, where legal constraints are more restrictive. The internal differences between French-speaking and German-speaking cantons in Switzerland, analyzed by Dominique Wisler and Hanspeter Kriesi in this volume, appear to confirm this trend. So too, the degree of formalization of negotiation practices shows considerable variance: rather informal in Italy, more formalized in Germany, fairly formalized in Great Britain. Constraints on the use of information-gathering techniques also vary. The Italian case, for instance, seems to be characterized by a lack of limits and controls on information-gathering activities by the *Digos* (the political police), which functions as an "epistemological" organ of the state, with the role of collecting information on all the political actors and interest groups and having a special direct relationship with the government (in this volume, see della Porta; for historical tradition, Reiter). These remaining differences highlight the need for further comparative and focused research.

A Model for the Explanation of Protest Policing Styles

How to explain the cross-national and intranational differences in protest policing styles, as well as their evolution in time? Figure 2 provides an outline of the different analytical levels that appear to be relevant in answering these questions.

First of all, protest policing styles are influenced by the political system—in particular, by what researchers of social movements have defined as the Political Opportunity Structure (POS) (McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1983, 1994; della Porta and Diani, 1997). A first analytical level refers to the stable opportunities in which a certain style of policing develops. Institutional features—such as police organization, the nature of the judiciary, law codes, and constitutional rights—may play an important role in defining the opportunities for and constraints on protest policing, as they set the conditions for the actual protest policing strategies. Moreover, aspects of the political culture, particularly those referring to conceptions of the state and citizens' rights, have similarly important effects (Brand, 1985; Kitschelt, 1986; Kriesi, 1991). Police studies have suggested that the very conditions of policing bring about the development of a particular police culture, including a series of stereotypes about disorders.

In addition to the relatively stable context, policing styles depend on a second, more "volatile" set of political opportunities. Various collective actors, in fact, put forward their interests or opinions, forming what Kriesi (1989) refers to as a "configuration of power." First of all, the government defines some general lines on how protest should be handled. In addition, social movements intervene on issues relating to citizens' rights and police tasks—they organize protest actions to denounce police brutality, they demand more democracy. Political parties, interest groups, trade unions, and voluntary associations conflict or cooperate with one another on the issue of how to police protest. Like-minded actors take sides on the issue, forming law-and-order coalitions on the one hand, and, on the other, civil rights coalitions (della Porta, 1997). The media are part of this picture, partially as a "spokesperson" of one or the other coalition, and partially following an "autonomous" logic.

The impact of the stable opportunities and the more volatile ones on protest policing styles is filtered by police knowledge—that is, the police's construction of external reality, collectively and individually—which we consider to be the main intervening variable between structure and action. The influence of institutional characteristics of the police, police culture, governments, and public opinion on protest policing finds a concrete expression

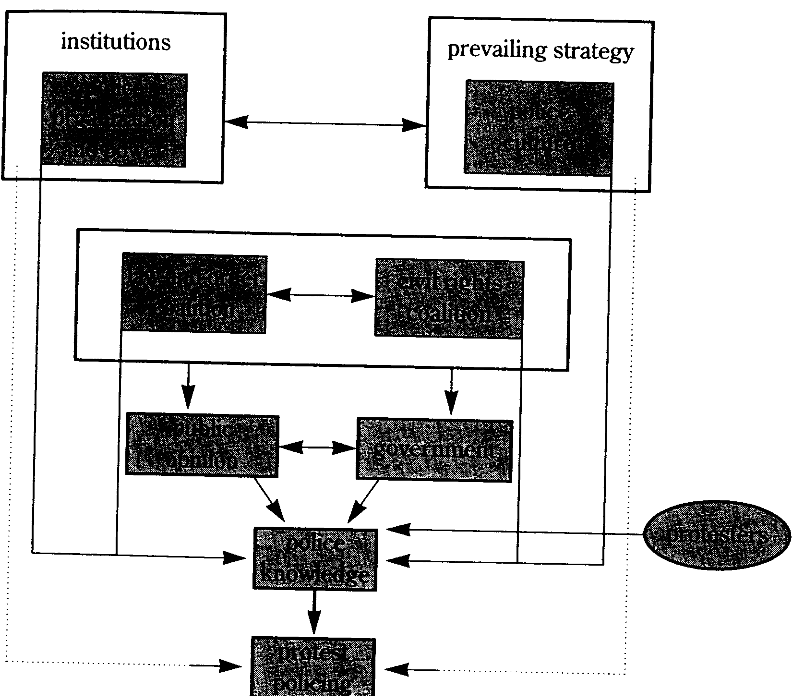

Fig. 2. A model to explain styles of "protest policing"

only insofar as it becomes part of the knowledge of the police. This level of analysis is all the more important when institutional actors enjoy—as is the case with the police—a high degree of discretionary power.

Institutional Characteristics of the Police and Protest Policing Styles

One of the institutional variables relevant to police behavior is constituted by the legal framework, including legislation on constitutional rights (right of movement, right of expression), defendants' rights (preventive detention, presence of one's attorney at interrogations, right of the police to interrogate a defendant), and prisoners' rights (privacy, contact with the external world). The Brokdorf decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court shows the extent to which legal decisions can open new spaces for protesters and restrict the range for police intervention (Winter, in this volume). A contrary dynamic was created by the failure of the Italian parliament to revise the fascist police laws, which remained on the books until the mid-1950s, effectively

obstructing legal popular protest and facilitating a wide range of police interventions (Reiter, in this volume). The final turning point for a democratic policing of protest in post-Franco Spain came about in 1983 with the new law on meeting and demonstration rights (Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, in this volume).

A second institutional variable relevant to police behavior is the organizational structure of the police. Particularly pertinent questions on the characteristics of police organizations refer to (*a*) centralization (How much power do decentralized units have? How powerful is the central government?), (*b*) accountability to the public (Do policemen wear identifying numbers or name tags? Are their actions subject to independent review? How easily can citizens bring formal complaints?), and (*c*) militarization (How dependent are the police on the defense ministry? Do they live in barracks? Are they part of the army? How great is the emphasis on "discipline"? What type of armaments do they use? Are the police unionized?).[6]

The effects of these features of police organization on police styles are unclear, however. According to Geary (1985, 123), centralization undermined the use of police forces as an employer's private army in Great Britain at the beginning of this century and led to a more impartial style of law enforcement. The fact, however, that the centralization process was initiated at the same time as the Labor Party won the majority in some local councils also indicates that centralization can have different aims.

Opinions also differ on the effects of centralization on police accountability. In a study of the police and labor disputes in England and Wales in the first four decades of this century, Jane Morgan (1987) suggested that one effect of centralization is a reduction of the accountability of the police to the democratic bodies. P. A. J. Waddington, however, studying the British police in the 1980s, observed: "Local control would not guarantee that the police would be employed in ways that liberal and radical critics would like" (Waddington, 1991, 134).[7]

Analyses of the effects of militarization on the police have drawn similarly contradictory conclusions.[8] In general, a militarily organized police force is considered to be more prone to brutality since it implies a hierarchical organization with "blind" obedience to order. Looking at the evolution of the British police, however, several scholars noted that militarization, with its implication of stricter control on rank-and-file officers, could actually help prevent brutality. As Reiner (1991, 54–55; see also Waddington, 1991, 136) remarked: "In violent confrontations, a 'non-militaristic' response by police (i.e., without adequate training, manpower, coordination, and defensive or even of-

fensive equipment) could mean that injuries will be multiplied. This doesn't just mean injuries to the police, but also to others who will suffer from undisciplined and excessive violence from constables who lose their cool or their courage."

Our own research indicates that the problems of centralization and militarization take on different dimensions in old and new democracies. It can be stated that an authoritarian or totalitarian regime is inconceivable without a militarized and centralized police. In the Italian and Spanish transition to democracy (respectively, Reiter and Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares, in this volume), reformist pressure was especially directed against these organizational features. This was not only because the dominant police model of the victors of World War II as well as of the Cold War was the Anglo-Saxon one, but also because police decentralization and demilitarization were considered necessary in order to ensure democratic accountability. As the example of Italy shows, failure to modify the centralized and militarized structures of the police forces emerging from an authoritarian or totalitarian regime can result in a circle of continuities, only broken by a complete generational turnover. The Spanish experience offers a more successful, if cautious, attempt to transform the Francoist security forces into a democratic police. The Italian police reform, which finally took place at the beginning of the 1980s, provides a further example of the contribution that organizational changes (such as demilitarization, unionization, recruitment of female police officers) can make toward an "opening up" of a police force (della Porta, in this volume).

The argument in old democracies seems to be conducted on a different level. The general trend toward a "softer" protest policing style developed in all the countries dealt with in this book, regardless of the different levels of centralization and militarization of the respective police forces (although a high level might have had a retarding effect). The practical impact of different degrees of centralization and militarization on police deployment and intervention in concrete public order cases has not yet been the subject of comparative research. However, the contributions of Fillieule and Jobard on France and of Waddington on England suggest that militarization and centralization are important elements in influencing protest policing styles when the police, to use Waddington's expression, have decided "to die in a ditch." In this case, a centralized police force with paramilitary capacities will be a far more formidable instrument than a decentralized civilian one. As a body it may tend to intervene more aggressively, even though a centralized, military organization will allow the leadership to exercise greater restraining control over the officers on the ground until the moment of intervention. Comparative research is needed to ascertain whether the same mechanisms can be found in special militarized riot units within generally decentralized civilian forces.

Police Culture and Protest Policing Styles

Although less formalized, the political culture of the different countries under review and the occupational culture of their police forces also constitute stable opportunities. Together with the organizational features, they provide the long-term underlying influences on protest policing styles. Kriesi applied to social movements the concept of national strategies of conflict resolution, elaborated in the analysis of industrial conflicts: "National strategies set the informal and formal rules of the game for the conflict" (1989, 295). Traditions are, in fact, embedded not only in laws but also in the political culture. Protest policing seems to be particularly sensitive to the cultural understanding of civil rights and police power. In particular, the "rootedness" of a democratic culture seems to have important consequences on the reactions of elites to emergent challengers, and vice versa. In both Italy and Germany, the institutional and emotional legacy of prewar fascist mass movements and their "legal revolutions" was reflected—well into the 1970s—in a "weak" acceptance of certain democratic rights. Thus, protest was perceived as a threat to democracy by the institutions, and state reactions were perceived as a sign of fascism by movement activists (della Porta, 1995, chap. 3). Generally speaking, however, the postwar years in Europe saw a continuous development and strengthening of a democratic political culture, which influenced the police and contributed to the emergence of the new protest policing styles.

In the analysis of police behavior, sociological research developed the concept of police culture. In seeking an explanation of policing styles, past research on the police—based mainly on ethnographic approaches to urban subdivisions of police at work—emphasized certain characteristics of the professional culture and, especially, of the operational culture widespread among officers. In his seminal work, Skolnick (1966, 231) suggested that the policeman understands his role as "craftsman rather than legal actor . . . skilled worker rather than civil servant obliged to subscribe to the rule of the law." Maureen Cain (1973) observed, in her research on the English police, that constables were oriented mainly toward crime fighting, although only a minor portion of their time was devoted to this task. Various studies have converged in indicating that, because of the very characteristics of their job,

policemen develop such attitudes as a tendency to secretive behavior and a lack of confidence in the external world (Rubinstein, 1973; Manning, 1979; Holdaway, 1984).

Some characteristics of the police culture have been noted as facilitating repressive attitudes. Referring to the Brixton riots, Benyot (1984) observes that the commonly held macho attitudes among rank-and-file policemen lead them to privilege crime fighting over peacekeeping. Analyzing the policing of the British miners' strike in the 1980s, Sarah McCabe and Peter Wallington suggested that since police activity tends to be tedious (waiting for something that almost never happens), the protests of the 1960s and 1970s may have produced some excitement among police officers (McCabe and Wallington, 1988, 43). According to Lipset (1971, 29), the general job experiences of policemen "enhance the possibility that whatever authoritarian traits they bring from their social background will increase rather than decrease. . . . In general, the policeman's job requires him to be suspicious of people, to prefer conventional behavior, to value toughness." Policemen tend to see themselves surrounded by a hostile world, which, especially in combination with certain organizational features such as militarization, can lead to isolation from society and aggressive feelings against those who are perceived as "diverse."

Two aspects in particular of the police culture generated by the work experience of policemen have important repercussions on protest policing. As already mentioned, the police, although bound by the law, form an institution with great discretionary power. This fact is worth underlining not only for the institution as a whole, but also for the individual policeman on the beat. Historical changes—even the obligation to follow the legality principle and to report any violation of the law—in practice did little to alter the situation. Most police interventions and sanctions continued to be triggered by situational moments, prejudice, stereotypes, and other imponderables and depended only to a lesser extent on the bureaucratic transposition of well-defined rules (Jessen, 1995, 32f.). The need to take on-the-spot decisions about whether to intervene or not makes policemen develop stereotypes about people and situations perceived as creating trouble or representing a danger. What is relevant about these stereotypes is that they become a kind of guideline for police intervention—for instance, the police images of Liverpool's Toxteth district pushed toward the tough policing style that eventually led to riots in 1981 (Brogden and Brogden, 1982, 245).

The long-term continuities in the conduct of policemen and the practice of policing resulting from these characteristics of police culture have been

repeatedly stressed (Lüdtke, 1992, 20). Recent research, however, tends to view with increasing skepticism the notion of an immutable police culture. Styles of conflict management, although surely resilient to a certain extent, change with time. As was observed, for instance, in a comparison of state responses to the antinuclear movements, traditionally exclusionary states may adopt very flexible tactics in order to avoid escalation, while traditionally inclusive states may use repression (Flam, 1994, 345). Historically relevant events can become turning points: in learning from past mistakes, collective actors develop new strategies (della Porta, 1995, chap. 3). Together with the transformation in the police environment, some features of the police's professional culture may also be changing. Such trends as a demilitarization of the police and their professionalization may be reflected in a higher class background, as well as in an increasing integration into society. Although the police still tend to consider themselves "craftsmen," an increasing emphasis on training, and a shift in its content, may also have effected changes in the police culture. Cross-national differences in the development of these phenomena may be one reason for the existing cross-national differences in protest policing in the countries under review.

Governments and Protest Policing Styles

The evolution of protest policing may be influenced in the long run by stable institutional and cultural opportunities and constraints. The relevant changes over time suggest, however, that, in addition to this stable context, protest policing is also dependent on the "volatile" configuration of power. As Roger Geary observed, "Of course, constitutionally the police are supposed to be a neutral law enforcement agency independent of political influence. However, there seems little doubt that the Government does influence the policing of industrial disputes both in terms of the overall approach and in terms of particular operational decisions" (1985, 125–26). In fact, the degree of political control on protest policing, which varies cross-nationally and over time, influences police styles. Political control on the police can, however, play in different directions. Shifts in the policing of protest—or techniques of repression—have often been traced to changes in the government's makeup. In his model of the determinants of repression in the United States, Goldstein (1978) considered the ideological position of the president as the most important variable. Several historical examples indicate that the policing of protest was an issue on which parties did in fact polarize along the traditional left-right cleavage. In his study on the policing of industrial disputes in Great Britain, Geary attributed the shift from a "hard style" to a "soft style" of protest policing—a

shift that he situated in about 1910—to political considerations that constrained the behavior of the authorities, in particular to the fact that "the Liberals, in order to maintain a majority over the conservatives, frequently had to rely on the support of Labor and Irish nationalist Members of Parliament" (1985, 117). Left-wing parties, with vivid memories of state repression of the labor and socialist movements, tended to rally in favor of civil liberties; conservative parties, fearful of losing votes to parties further to their right, often advocated law and order. A comparative study of Italy and Germany (della Porta, 1995) shows that, in general, protest policing was "softer" and more tolerant when the left was in government, whereas conservative governments were inclined to use "harder" tactics. In Italy, the center-left governments of the 1960s broke with the tradition of allowing the police to shoot at demonstrators. In Germany, the first Social Democratic-Free Democratic (SPD-FDP) government of Willi Brandt (1969–72) developed a more tolerant style of protest policing and liberalized laws concerning public marches and citizens' rights. In Great Britain in the 1980s, a partial rollback to a "harder" protest policing was instead connected with the political choices of the conservative government led by Margaret Thatcher.

It would be inaccurate, however, to claim that left-wing governments are always more tolerant of protest than conservative governments. Indeed, there seem to be periods in which the main parties do not greatly differ in their position on internal security policy (on Germany, see Funk, 1990). One possible reason for this is that protest policing is, in fact, a tricky issue for left-wing governments. The comparative study on Italy and Germany (della Porta, 1995) indicated, for instance, that left-wing governments often have to face difficult law-and-order campaigns launched by the conservative opposition (as happened in Germany under Chancellor Brandt). It is especially when the left feels the need to legitimate itself as "fit to govern" that it has to make concessions to the hard-line proponents of law and order. Such compromises not only inevitably disappoint social movement activists (usually to the advantage of the most radical wings), they also elicit internal criticism. Just as left-wing governments are not automatically lenient toward protest, so too conservatives in power do not always implement repressive policies. For instance, the swing from left to right in the state government amid the turmoil of the Berlin squatters' movement in 1981 did not interrupt the negotiations for a political solution, although some incidents did escalate into violence simply because the squatters anticipated a harder reaction by the conservative government (CILIP, 1981).

As the case studies presented in this volume indicate, government obviously retains a great potential influence on protest policing. The example of Italy in the immediate postwar period analyzed by Reiter shows the extent to which orders from the central government can affect protest policing at the local level. In this case, the government not only named "the enemy," but also outlined the types of police intervention to be exercised and evaluated the results achieved. For both France and England, our contributors emphasize the strong influence maintained by political powers, albeit with perceivable differences, on the question of when to intervene. Reporting on the criticism voiced by police officers on this interference, Fillieule and Jobard propose that it is more appropriate to speak of political antagonism than of police antagonism in those cases where the government, basing its decisions on political considerations, orders an antagonistic police intervention. The influence of government on protest policing styles also makes itself felt in a more general way, as is shown by the existence of two protest policing "lines" (one of Social Democratic-governed North Rhine-Westphalia and the other of conservative-governed Bavaria) in the Federal Republic of Germany (see Winter, in this volume). On the other hand, P. A. J. Waddington (in this volume), while underlining the influence of political power, also stresses the considerable degree of autonomy of the police, who, in the case of an anarchist demonstration in Trafalgar Square, would not be compelled to "die in the ditch" by the minister whose actions were perceived as arbitrary and partisan.

The recent developments toward a "softer" protest policing style seem to have gone hand in hand with a retreat of government from direct intervention. Our research indicates two connected developments: in general, governments increasingly tend to leave the technical side of policing protest to the police, who, in turn increasingly perceive their role in policing social and political conflicts as problematic, criticizing politicians for handing responsibility over to the police for situations that can be resolved only politically. Historically, the absence of instructions on protest policing from the political power has led to disorientation among the police, with contrasting consequences—in most cases tending more toward apathy than toward aggressive activism. In serious public order events, the lack of such political guidance might lead to a dominance of on-the-ground emotions and to an escalation of the confrontation between protesters and police into a win-or-lose battle.

Public Opinion, the Media, and Protest Policing Styles

Government choices on protest policing are sensitive to the pressures of various actors. Political parties, interest groups, and movement organizations

express their preferences on protest policing, addressing either their constituency, the public, or the policymakers directly. Their discourses are then filtered through the media, thereby influencing public opinion.

Protest policing is an issue on which the more radical actors often find alliances, leading to the formation of civil rights coalitions. For instance, in his research on the policing of industrial disputes in Great Britain, Geary stated: "In the past the use of lethal force against defenseless working people had been counterproductive in several ways. Opposition from a broad section of political opinion could be expected and this often proved extremely embarrassing for the Government" (1985, 117). When the police are perceived as "overreacting," a process of "solidarization" is set in motion between those who are the direct target of repression and larger—often more moderate—forces. The reaction in England to the Peterloo Massacre in 1819 offers a historical illustration of this point: "For a time ultra-radicals and moderates buried their differences in a protest movement with which many Whigs were willing to associate" (Thompson, 1968, 756).

Moments can occur, however, when the public (or a part of the public) asks for a "tougher" intervention, and law-and-order coalitions arise. The "majoritarian"—or more vociferous—public opinion of the day is, in fact, not always a "liberal" one. Historical examples can readily be located in which hard-line policies were implemented in response to pressure exerted by law-and-order coalitions. According to Zwerman (1987), the "harder" counterterrorist policies of the Reagan administration resulted from the pressure of right-wing groups (such as the Moral Majority) on the national government. Thus, "tough" police intervention may be criticized by some, while appreciated by others. A study on the impact on the public of the policing of the 1984–85 miners' strike in Great Britain showed that, while alienating the strikers, the police's hard line improved the image of the police among nonstrikers (Green, 1990, chap. 3). Phases of "moral panic" (Cohen, 1972) have often generated demands for "law and order."

The media enter this picture partly as a "spokesperson" of one or the other coalition and partly with their own "autonomous" logic. Media attention to social protest seems to have the effect of generating a shift toward more tolerant policing. In particular since the seventies, the daily press appeared to be more critical toward "tough" police interventions, and more pluralistic (della Porta, 1997). The mere presence of journalists, in fact, appears to have a de-escalating effect on the police, although the fact that this presence does not always discourage the police from a "hard" style of intervention is testified to by the very existence of media coverage of such interventions. First of all, appreciation of the influence maintained by the media and interested coalitions on protest policing styles in contemporary European democracies should not lead to an overestimation of their weight in general. Although studies on the police in transition phases to democracy show that the police are very sensitive and dependent on public support during such periods, the Italian case in particular also demonstrates the degree to which, even in a democracy, the police may use repressive policies, despite the opposition of a large and well-organized minority (Reiter, in this volume). This is especially true when the police enjoy unlimited government support and receive clear directives, that is, if they know that the difficulties of the job, considerable if they have to suppress a large minority, are outweighed by the possible trouble that could result if they fail to follow the government's orders. Second, there are also cases where the media become the promoters of law-and-order campaigns. One example is the coverage by the Springer press, especially the tabloid *Bild*, of the student movement in Germany, most notably in Berlin. Third, there are indications that media coverage by its very nature can work as an agent of escalation. Certain characteristics of news production seem to generate a media "bias" in favor of the police. As Murdock (1984, 78) observed, "Contrary to the 'high' and 'low' conspiracy theories favored by some critics of the news media, the answer does not lie in interventions from on high or in the personal prejudices of journalists and editors, but in the routine business of news production and the practical and commercial pressures which shape it." First among these characteristics is the fact that in news gathering journalists rely on official sources—and among them the police are usually a preferred one.[9] Not only are police spokespeople given ample space in accounts of disorders, even the pictures reflect the police "point of view" since, for security reasons, they are usually taken from behind the police. A second characteristic of the "business of news production" that can produce a biased image of protesters is the rule that a "good story" should focus on dramatic and violent actions, involving large numbers of participants, and not on the incidents that originally triggered off such mass events (D. Waddington, 1992, 177). Third, like other actors, the press uses stereotypes that oppose rampaging crowds to sober citizens, that identify troublemakers with hooligan youth.

Although they do not deal directly with public opinion and the media, the chapters in this volume indicate a growing public stigmatization of coercive police management of political demonstrations and social protest. This is at least the perception by the police, as we shall see in more detail. However, as suggested by Wisler and Kriesi in this volume, public opinion seems to be

less tolerant of disruptive protest behavior when other protest channels are available. Moreover, coercive policing is better accepted, or even advocated, if directed against violent protesters.

The Interaction between the Police and Protesters and Protest Policing Styles

Another variable that undoubtedly influences protest policing styles is the interaction between protesters and the police, a dynamic that is not restricted to single protest events. The police, in fact, seem to be equipped with an elephant's memory: the history of previous interactions with protesters is an important element shaping today's protest policing.

The prohibition of a demonstration can set up violent dynamics. Research on disorderly demonstrations in London over a period of one hundred years has shown that "violence has tended to occur whenever protesters have been castigated as 'subversive,' 'unpatriotic,' or 'communistic'; when their activities were likely to prove embarrassing to the government, monarchy or 'national reputation,' or when the demonstration was technically illegal, occurring in a defiance of legal prohibition" (D. Waddington, 1992, 29). As the police leaders recognize, the implementation of a ban on demonstrating is a source of violent escalation (for instance, Wisler, Barranco, and Tackenberg, 1996, 7; see also Fillieule, 1995a).

Moreover, certain police techniques can lead to escalation during interaction with demonstrators. As Gary T. Marx (1972, 79) explains, "Contrary to riot control manuals (and usually the wishes of higher authorities) as police encounter a crowd they may break ranks, raise their nightsticks above their shoulders and hit people on the head rather than the body." The dispersal of crowds, in fact, is a delicate task, and the main instrument of coercive police intervention—the baton charge—easily leads to escalation:[10]

> The reason why baton charges are difficult to control is known colloquially in the Metropolitan Police as "the red mist". This refers to a potential cocktail of psychological conditions which diminishes any person's self-control, and from which the police are not exempt. Baton charges require officers to act aggressively in conditions of relative anonymity . . . they may be wearing protective clothing with visors to obscure their facial features; and they will almost certainly be acting, not as individuals, but as a group. The target of their actions will not be other individuals, but an equally anonymous collective—"the crowd", "Them"—who will have insulted and physically attacked "Us"—the police. Officers' anger and frustration will thus have been aroused, and a baton charge will allow retaliation in conditions which minimize individual responsibility. (Waddington, 1991, 177–78)

Particularly in crowd dispersal, an additional risk of escalation derives from organizational dynamics. As Monjardet observed (1990, 217ff.), there are at least three main mechanisms in police intervention that favor escalation: the dialectic of centralization and autonomy in police units, the difficulties of coordinating the different groups, and uncertainty about the aims of the intervention. Although a police force may have well-developed techniques for controlling large masses, it may be ill prepared to isolate and control small groups operating within larger crowds (ibid., 233). In Italy and Germany (della Porta, 1995), certain much-criticized "hard" police interventions—that eventually led to escalation—occurred during peaceful mass demonstrations "infiltrated" by small radical groups. In such situations, the handling of law and order indeed called for a difficult equilibrium between control of the radicals and respect for the rights of the moderates. Moreover, especially in Germany in the 1980s, claims of police brutality often followed the authorities' decision to deploy units from different states to police protest events. In these cases, lack of coordination and a poor knowledge of the territory may have led to the escalation of conflicts, even when a strategy of de-escalation had been planned by the police leadership.[11] Moreover, as Gary T. Marx (1972, 89) noticed, police riots may occur:

> The above, superior officers may lose the power to control their men. The chain of command and communication between and within enforcement agencies, often unclear to begin with, may completely break down. . . . Some police behavior seems as much, or more, inspired by the desire for vengeance, retaliation and "to teach the bastards a lesson" as by the desire to restore law and order.

However, the effects of police-protester interactions are not restricted to the dynamics of a single encounter. Individual incidents may have long-term repercussions on police attitudes toward protest. If the image of a "weak" police—especially when "promoted" by political entrepreneurs—can produce fear in the public and calls for more "effective" repression, the impression of having been "defeated" will also have important consequences within the police. These consequences go beyond immediate reactions such as promises to take revenge, and extend to tactical and structural changes. In Great Britain, a perceived police "defeat" during a picketing action in Saltley in the 1970s led to the organization of a system of mutual aid between the various local police forces, as well as to the establishment of a National Recording Center. Later on, the visible weakness of the police during the riots of the early 1980s allowed for an increasing specialization and armament of the "antirioting" branches (in this volume, see Waddington, Reiner). As Geary

(1985, 127) has observed, "It's only after you have been seen by the public to lose at one tactical level that you can escalate to the next level."

The history of interactions between protesters and police is of great importance in explaining protest policing dynamics. Such interactions are the concrete expression of the national strategies developed to deal with challengers, as mentioned earlier. For the police, the history of their relations with specific protest groups constitutes an important element in decisions on tactics to be applied. For this reason, the impact of the virtuous circle of less and less violence on public demonstrations has to be stressed. These mechanisms are already taking us into the category of police knowledge, to which we now turn.

Police Knowledge and Protest Policing Styles

As police research has often revealed, the police are a bureaucracy with a very high degree of discretion. Several studies have addressed the question of police behavior, explaining the different strategies adopted by police officers and/or police units. In particular, a "situational" approach relates police choices to environmental characteristics, while an "attitudinal" approach concentrates on the individual preferences of police officers (for a review, see Worden, 1989). Both approaches share the persuasion that (*a*) a large degree of discretion exists in police behavior, and (*b*) there are systematic variations. As Manning observed, "Policing tends to be shaped by adaptations made by actors to structural patterns, to the reality they perceive, construct and maintain" (1979, 48–49). For a full understanding of protest policing styles it is not enough to look at the variables discussed so far. We also have to examine police knowledge; that is, the police's perception of their role and of the external reality. For organizational features, police culture, governments, public opinion, and interaction with protesters to have an influence on protest policing styles, their input has to be taken up by the police and transformed into knowledge.

Why do we refer to the police's perception of their role and of external reality as "knowledge" and not just as "images"? A first reason is connected with the *great discretion* that the police enjoy as an organization and as individual officers. In an apparent reversal of the mechanism typical of bureaucracies, which sees increased discretionary latitude at the top of the hierarchy, the rank-and-file policemen on the spot hold a very extensive power of definition over the situation. Police officers seem to intervene first of all on the basis of their appreciation of the situation, and only secondarily on the basis of rules and regulations (Jessen, 1995, 32f.). In this sense, the police's perception of external reality serves as the equivalent of the specialized

knowledge of other parts of the bureaucracy.[12] It is not subordinate to rules and regulations contained in written manuals, but is equally important for the carrying out of police duty, and is not restricted to certain shortcuts and tricks of the trade taught by experience.

A second reason for the use of the term "knowledge" can be found in the range and depth of police knowledge, which is not limited to fleeting images, stereotypes, and prejudices, but extends to the *core problems* of protest policing. To give an example, Waddington in this volume calls the policing of protest in democracies "intrinsically morally ambiguous: protesters are not criminals, but citizens participating in the political process; . . . any conflict between protesters and the police tends to be a battle of moral equals in which both sides are seeking the approval of bystanders." Interviews with police officers, which served as the main tool for the study of police knowledge in our research, show that they are aware, precisely for this reason, that protest policing is a particularly delicate task. As a British superintendent observed, "In our society if we arrest a man for stealing everybody else says, 'serves him right,' but where you get into an area where you are arresting a man in relation to his work [i.e., during a strike] then there are emotions involved here that are not as clear-cut to the average guy" (in Geary, 1985, 127).

A third reason for the use of the term "police knowledge" lies in the *interconnection* of perceptions of external reality. These perceptions do not remain isolated images, but form a body of knowledge. To take the example of a feature of the police occupational culture, namely, police images about protesters and demonstrations: the distinction made by the police between "ordinary decent protesters" and "professional protesters," which will be discussed in detail later, reflects the institutional pressure, that is, the political impact (Waddington, in this volume). It is furthermore based on instruction and on past work experiences. It represents an adaptation of general stereotypes developed by the police about disorders and disordered behavior, and takes into account the dynamics of police interaction with some specific groups—because "Demonstrators' and policemen's images reflect each other. The image the demonstrators have of the police will have an impact upon the images the police have of the demonstrators" (McClintock et al., 1974, 102). In the final score, it is influenced by the media and public opinion in general, but also by a reflection on the media coverage of demonstrations. With police knowledge, we refer, then, to the police's "construction of the external reality" (Berger and Luckman, 1966).

The way in which police knowledge translates into a protest policing style will be discussed in what follows by means of the examples of police stereo-

types of "protesters." The process works for protest policing in the same way as for police work in general: "The action of the police, as a force of social control, depends of course on the received order (authorized demonstration or non authorized demonstration), but also on the images that the policemen have of those very groups they have to police. . . . Control or dispersion of the demonstrators will be more or less brutal according to this image" (McClintock et al., 1974, 102). In his explanation of the brutal police repression of protests during the 1968 Democratic Convention in Chicago, Donner (1990, 116) observed that the police believed that an army of demonstrators had planned to invade the city (some movement literature had boasted an invasion of the city of between one hundred and two hundred thousand demonstrators, although no more than five thousand came). They also believed the "threats" disseminated by Yippies as a sort of theater provocation to "burn the city down" or flood the city sewers with gasoline or dump LSD in the water supply (ibid., 116–17).

Stereotypes about protesters may overlap with those of other groups usually included in the (socially constructed) definition of public disorders. In their analysis of certain examples of public behavior understood as constituting public disorder and in response to which public order law was or could have been used (with particular regard to youth gangs, soccer hooligans, vagrants and traveling people, industrial conflict, and inner-city riots), Nicola Lacey, Celia Wells, and Dirk Meure noted the presence of recurring themes, such as the ideas of the young, outsiders (such as immigrants, ethnic minority members, or "agents provocateurs"), deviants, and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups as being especially implicated in public disorder (1990, 71). In addition to "old" stereotypes, some of which, like the "conspiracy theory," enjoy a surprising life span and vitality, "new" ones can emerge during waves of protest.[13] Stereotypes about one form of public disorder can spread to others. Taking the example of Great Britain again, it was observed that the experiences of the 1970s in Northern Ireland surfaced in the "framing" of the riots of the early 1980s, and then spread to the policing of the miners' strike. Commenting on the Tactical Options Manual distributed in 1982 to senior police officers in Great Britain—a manual that introduced maneuvers of an essentially military character and redirected police methods from the individual-oriented tradition to that of the team, and from the reactive tradition to a proactive one—McCabe and Wallington affirm:

> The style of policing reflected in the Tactical Options Manual was consciously copied from the crowd control methods developed in colonial police forces (such as Hong Kong) and in Northern Ireland. . . . While the 1981 riots may have been the principal catalyst to the drawing up of the manual, and perhaps future urban riots the main intended occasion for its practical implementation, in the event the first full-scale use of the type of maneuvers envisaged was during the miners' strike, most spectacularly during the confrontations at Orgreave. (McCabe and Wallington, 1988, 48–49)

Research has indicated that the police have quite complex images of demonstrators. Helmut Willems and his collaborators (1988) discovered that policemen have surprisingly little knowledge of protesters' motives. Nevertheless, the image of demonstrators was found to be a complex one, in which "peaceful demonstrators" are set in opposition to "hooligans." According to the police, "Peaceful demonstrators have a pragmatic interest, and a clear aim, for which they engage themselves with a lot of involvement and credibility. They make use of their basic right to demonstrate. Normally, they are peaceful demonstrators . . . with a direct interest in the conflict. . . . They are willing to discuss, they are well informed" (Willems et al., 1988, 153). Violent hooligans, on the other hand,

> are not interested in the topic of the conflict, but only in rioting, in reducing their aggression in the struggle with the police. They are described as destructive and misinformed. They travel from demonstration to demonstration, are probably supported and financed by wire-pullers. . . . In comparison with the peaceful demonstrators, they are a relatively small group, many of them are very young, and for this reason are easy to influence. Normally, they are not interested in discussions. (Ibid., 153–54)

The police distinction between "good" and "bad" demonstrators is based on their conception of "legitimate" protest, as well as on their expectations of the demonstrators' behavior. As P. A. J. Waddington noticed, legitimate protest, linked to social problems and organized by people aiming to make themselves heard in order to solve the problems, is sharply contrasted to protests by "professional demonstrators," who upset public order because they enjoy provocation and revolt (Waddington, 1994b, 112–13). In the Italian case (see della Porta and De Biasi in this volume), a widespread perception among the police is that the principal actors producing disorder in the 1990s were motivated not by political beliefs—considered to be "noble" ends—but by an impulse toward "hooliganism," which reflects the existence of social problems. In fact, a distinction is made between "good" demonstrators, who protest to achieve comprehensible ends and are well organized in their actions, and "bad" demonstrators, whose objectives appear to be more confused and whose actions are disorganized. Among the former category are "workers" or "family men"—according to the definitions of interviewees—who

demonstrate in defense of their jobs or in favor of union demands, and who have both a long experience of demonstrations and a noteworthy capacity to manage them. Among the second category are the hooligans and young people from social centers, whose demands are considered at best to be "confused," and whose behavior often appears "unpredictable." Similar observations emerge from the French case study (Fillieule and Jobard, in this volume). As Gary T. Marx (1972, 79) had already noticed studying the American police reaction to urban riots and as our research confirms, police images of protesters define their strategic choices and behavior: "When the disturbance seems apolitical, unfocused and primarily expressive, and when there is no minimal organization among rioters . . . authorities may have no alternative—from their viewpoint—but the graduated use of force."

Police knowledge intervenes as a filter on all the levels of figure 2, and not only for the occupational culture of the police, from which the examples of stereotypes discussed earlier are taken. The presumed impact of organizational features such as centralization and militarization on police officers' perception of their role fueled police reform efforts in various countries. As far as the legal framework is concerned, the underenforcement of the law, singled out as one of the most significant tendencies characterizing protest policing in the 1990s, provides a clear example of the way in which police knowledge acts as a filter. For instance, in his discussion of the Brokdorf decision of the German Federal Constitutional Court, Martin Winter emphasizes that it was the reception of this legal decision by the police that gave it its impact on protest policing.

Police knowledge works in the same way in terms of the impact that the political powers have on protest policing styles practiced in specific cases. Waddington (in this volume) emphasizes that "institutional power is refracted through the lens of how the police define their task." The London police do not need a specific order to protect the memorial to Britain's war dead from desecration; their knowledge of the consequences for their image should it be profaned is sufficient. In Germany, there are cases of ***vorauseilender Gehorsam*** (obedience in advance) (Winter, in this volume). In countries like Italy, where the police have a tradition of political dependence, the efforts of the police are oriented toward perceiving "which way the wind is blowing," so that, for instance, the governmental change in Italy in 1994 led to a period of extreme caution for the police as they waited for political directives on the management of public order (della Porta, in this volume).

Police knowledge also "filters" the demands coming from the public and "published" opinion. As Nigel Fielding observed, "Few mothers and children have been prosecuted for disrupting traffic while demanding pedestrian crossings. . . . Obstruction and even conspiracy charges could have been applied, if the group were not one to whom the police judged most people to be sympathetic" (1991, 77). The police are not only conscious of the presence of the mass media at demonstrations, but are also knowledgeable about the mechanisms of media coverage. According to a British superintendent:

> We are very much aware of the media which controls to some extent police action. So that action, when it's seen on the film, has got to be seen to be reasonable. If we act unreasonably, then yes, we could alienate the public, not in the issue, but in the way that we deal with them [demonstrations]. . . . We have got to protect our image. (Ibid., 130)

To conclude this discussion of police knowledge, it is worth underlining that a study of this subject must confront certain difficulties, beside the fact that it is not only written knowledge which is being analyzed. An analysis of interviews with police officers will show that "the" police and consequently "the" police knowledge do not exist.[14] The control exercised over the police by political authorities, for instance, is perceived differently on different levels of the police hierarchy. In the British case, the more attentive awareness of senior officers seems to have had a restraining effect on rank-and-file members. As one inspector observed:

> These senior officers, they are into this low profile, softly, softly, community relations approach, and let these strikers get away with just about every offense short of murder. . . . We ought to just once move in hard—that's all it would take and we'd have no more problems. These senior officers, well, they are too scared to do that. They are worried about questions being asked in Parliament, about their chances of promotion, about being criticized . . . about whether the Home Secretary would call for a report, etc., etc. (In Geary, 1985, 125)

Furthermore, the police themselves do not appear to reflect critically on their construction of external reality as knowledge, interpreting it as "experience" and "on-the-job learning." Police knowledge is therefore probably shifting and possibly contradictory, different for different levels of police hierarchy and for different police branches.

Escalation and De-escalation: The Consequences of Protest Policing

We can turn now to the effects of protest policing on social movements, and particularly on protest tactics. The social science literature provides us with several hypotheses on this point. Some scholars have stated that a reduction

in repression facilitates the development of revolutions and social movements (Skocpol, 1979; McAdam, 1982; della Porta, 1995). A high degree of repression and an illiberal political culture have often been associated with radical behavior on the part of challengers (Goldstein, 1983, 340; Kitschelt, 1985, 302–3). As a reaction to police repression, the protest focus tends to shift from the single issue to the meta-issue of protest rights (Escobar, 1993, 1485). As mentioned, the general trend since the 1970s and 1980s has been toward a more tolerant, selective, and "soft" policing style, which tends to institutionalize many forms of protest. This de-escalation seems to be based on a "virtuous circle." The "institutionalization" of protest and social movements provides an additional reason to foresee the prevalence of more tolerant behavior—also on the side of the police—as we can in fact expect that the more instrumental movement would have a greater interest in maintaining the support of public opinion. In particular, this would be true of those movements that are more strictly affiliated with a political party. The labor movement in Great Britain offers a good example. Geary observed, in fact, that the trade unionists he interviewed were "highly sensitive to the political implications of industrial disorder" and attributed their sensitivity to their "close identification with the Labor Party" (Geary, 1985, 120). As one trade unionist stated, "Miners are not fools. They almost all vote Labor and they are aware of the effect trouble at the picket line would have on the election" (ibid., 123).

The fact that violent behavior tends to be more and more stigmatized can, however, produce new cycles of more repressive attitudes. In the late 1960s, Allan Silver (1967), commenting on a general trend toward increasing stigmatization of violence, observed the risk of no longer seeing the possibility of a political solution for violent behavior. Looking at the reactions to violent forms of protest in the 1980s, it seems that Silver was right. To provide just one example, writing about the 1980 Bristol riot, Joshua and Wallace stress the refusal of the Home Office and the national government to acknowledge the political and social reasons behind the events. The main reaction was instead the "armament" of the police with "aggressive" riot equipment (the shock had been the fact that the police had had to withdraw from the Saint Paul's district during the riots): "Then in the space of a few weeks riot equipment and tactics once considered unacceptable, i.e. crash helmets, new riot shields, new protective uniforms, and the use of police Land Rovers to break up crowds became the norm. CS gas was used and officially sanctioned, as were water cannons, plastic bullets, and armored police vehicles as 'a last resort'" (Joshua and Wallace, 1983, 127).

This mechanism may be reinforced by some of the police tactics charac-

terizing protest policing in Europe today: the de-escalating efforts of modern protest policing—with underenforcement of the law, the search to negotiate, and large-scale collection of information—may backfire. Waddington's research in particular has illustrated the potential of control that can be achieved with this tactic, a form of control that may result in making protest invisible. Should the police yield to the temptation to "overcontrol" protest, protesters might get the impression that their demonstration is useless because invisible, and change to more spectacular tactics in order to make themselves seen and heard. Similar reactions may be provoked by the emphasis on large-scale collection of information, which is also characteristic of the general trend toward increasing control. In fact, agencies that deal with intelligence gathering and the prevention of crime or subversion have shown an inherent tendency to expand (Marx, 1979, 112; Garret, 1981, 224–25). A parallel trend was singled out by police historians who suggested that the retreat of the police force from its welfare functions was compensated for by a progressive expansion of the security concept to include ever greater risks, so that the new concept of police in practice also included the order of the whole society (Jessen, 1995, 31).

These last observations lead to the question: In which direction will protest policing in contemporary democracies move? Will the adoption of a "soft," tolerant, selective, legal, preventive, consensual, flexible, and professional protest policing style be definitive? It is not our intention to foretell the future, but the results of the research presented in this volume give certain indications. Not only the character of these changes, but also the nature of the continuities in protest policing can give us an idea about the reversibility of the trend toward a "softer" and more tolerant protest policing style.

One theoretical possibility for a reversal of the trend lies in a change of the environment. Our research has shown that, in their dealings with protest, the police will react to shifts in the demands from outside. If these demands come from the government, the police are likely to fulfill them, even if they remain unconvinced about their usefulness or effectiveness, although they might voice protest. As historical examples show, police forces will fulfill demands by the government, even without regard for their correspondence with democratic rights. With this we do not wish to imply in any way that there are indications that such orders might be given, nor do we want to question the fact that democratic principles are more deeply rooted in today's police forces than in earlier periods. In most European countries, in fact, the visible government input in the wake of the 1960s has been predominantly in the direction of greater respect for democratic rights, and consequently "softer" pro-

test policing—and there are no indications of a development in the contrary direction. However, the nature of the relationship between the police and government is such that if a government were to order a change in public order policies, the police would feel bound to comply.

At least of equal importance to government input for the development of more tolerant protest policing styles is the pressure of public opinion, which over the last decades has veered in the direction of a growing acceptance of a wide range of previously condemned protest activities. This shift was perceived by the police and translated into a different policing of protest. Underlying this attitude is the fact that a failure to perceive the preferences in the public would have to be paid for by a loss of legitimation, a fact about which the police are very conscious. Any such loss could be compensated for only by the government's willingness to shield the police from criticism and to back the stepping up of coercive and repressive measures, a choice possible only to a certain degree.[15] In the absence of such support the police would not "die in the ditch" for any abstract notions about order, but would try to accommodate the demands of the public. In the same way, however, the police will try to accommodate eventual demands by the public for "harder" protest policing.

By following popular shifts, the police show a capacity to learn. Changes and learning processes of the police are initiated by an analysis of problematic public order interventions, that is, the police learn by analyzing their failures.[16] Over the last decades, the police forces in Europe have proved to be capable of incorporating new experiences into their body of police knowledge, making the continuation of a "soft" and tolerant protest policing style more likely. The importance of the body of past experience, however, seems such that it prevents the police from anticipating change. Tactical and strategic errors in confrontations with new movements and protest forms may trigger off a relapse into an antagonistic protest policing style.

Notwithstanding the changes in protest policing over the past three decades, there are also significant elements of continuity. The police remain the state agency for the protection of order and security, which they establish, if need be, by means of force. The range of options for intervention theoretically open to the police has remained basically unchanged. As underlined several times, the dominant protest policing style in Europe is selective, that is, different police styles are used for different actors. In this way, "brutal" and repressive styles have survived. These styles are connected with the same kind of stereotypes about professional disturbers of the peace, conspirators, and so on, as before. The difference today is that these stereotypes

and protest policing styles are now applied only to a small minority among the protesters, whereas historically they were used against large sections of the population, such as the members and associations of the working-class movement. It is this kind of continuity in the role of the police, in the range of options theoretically open to them, and in the mechanisms with which they individuate and label "dangerous" enemies that makes arrest or reversal of the trend toward "softer" and more tolerant protest policing styles a possibility of which we have to be aware.

Notes

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1. At the conference, two additional contributions were presented on the Hungarian case (Szabo, 1995; Szikinger, 1995) that are not included in this collection.
2. According to Wisler, Barranco, and Tackenberg (1996), the different dimensions tend to define two coherent protest policing styles, one more opportunist, tolerant, soft, selective, and flexible, the other legalistic, repressive, hard, diffuse, and dissuasive.
3. Lüdtke (1992, 17) sees the long-term changes in Germany since the nineteenth century in a process of professionalization and *Verrechtlichung*, as well as a growing pressure for public justification.
4. A similar trend also appeared in the Hungarian case (see Szabo, 1995; Szikinger, 1995).
5. Since the prime emphasis of the urban units was identification, photography became an operational focus. Technological sophistication in this field allowed for expansion in the area covered (from half a mile away) and for an extended time (twenty-four hours a day, thanks to infrared circuits). Other techniques of control included wiretapping, electronic bugging, and the planting of informers.
6. Some characteristics of the secret services and the judiciary can also be of relevance to protest policing. For instance, the specialization of the secret services in internal versus external security and their relative dependence on the military are also important factors in any attempt to define the context for protest and protest policing.
7. Waddington added: "Police in countries like the USA, who were under local political control and where citizens were protected by a Bill of Rights, saw *more, not less*, violence" (1991, 134–35).
8. Jessen (1995, 30) recalls that a partial militarization of the police was the price to be paid for the retreat of the military from the arena of social conflicts.
9. "The police are news," writes Nigel Fielding (1991, 17).
10. For an analysis of the escalation of confrontations during the student movement of the sixties in West Germany, see Sack, 1984.
11. This point is also made by Marx (1972, 85). On escalation and unforeseen consequences of police intervention, see also Monet (1990).
12. Max Weber defined "specialized knowledge" as the knowledge acquired via a specific education, and "service knowledge" as the knowledge—available only to the functionaries—of the concrete events necessary to control the administration ([1922] 1974, 735).

13. Other widespread stereotypes are those of the "rotten apple" and "communist agitators" (among others, see McClintock et al., 1974, 127–30; McCabe and Wallington, 1988, 43–44).

14. On this point, see also Winter in this volume.

15. Even in totalitarian states, the police depended on the acquiescence and collaboration of the population. The sheer numerical relationship between the police, especially the political branch, and the population would have made any kind of policing based on pure coercion impossible. The Gestapo, for instance, was not ever-present, and if it seemed to be all-knowing, this resulted from the propagation of a myth and was based on large-scale cooperation or collaboration. On this subject, see the contributions in Paul and Mallmann (1995).

16. For instance, recalling the negative political consequences of the police killing of demonstrators in February 1934, Monjardet (1990, 214–15) suggested that the French police are still trained to consider demonstrators not as an enemy, but as a temporary adversary, and to avoid injuring or killing people.

Part I

Policing Protest in Established Democracies