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Social Movements and the State: Thoughts on the Policing of Protest

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EUI Working Paper RSC No. 95/13

European University Institute, Florence

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BADIA FIESOLANA, SAN DOMENICO (FI)

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Printed in Italy in September 1995
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Badia Fiesolana
I – 50016 San Domenico (FI)
Italy

The relationship between social movements and the state is a crucial theme for the understanding of collective action. Long neglected, it acquired a new relevance with the development of the "political process" approach to social movements (Tilly 1978; McAdam 1982). Within this approach, the "political opportunity structure" (POS) (Eisinger 1973; McAdam 1982; Tarrow 1983) is the most inclusive concept we have for dealing with the external, political conditions for protest. In this paper, while referring to political opportunities for social movements in Italy and the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War, I will particularly focus on protest policing as one single variable. I consider protest policing an important barometer of the political opportunities available for social movements, and suggest it has an important effect on action repertoires. Looking at the evolution of policing styles and protest forms of action, I stress the importance of framing processes.

I will discuss some advantages of a research on protest policing, and summarize the relevant information on the evolution of protest policing in Italy and Germany, comparing the historical evolution of policing styles in the two countries. After these descriptive parts, I will develop a model for the study of causes and consequences of protest policing, and propose some hypotheses on the political opportunities and constraints on protest policing, looking at the more stable political opportunities, the more volatile configuration of power, and at police preferences. I will comment on the potential effects of policing strategies, and conclude with a summary.

PROTEST POLICING AS A BAROMETER OF POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES: AN INTRODUCTION

I define one specific aspect of state response to protest, the policing of protest, as "the police handling of protest events" -- a more neutral description for what protestors usually refer to as "repression" and the state as "law and order." Although the variable "repression" is included in several explanatory models on insurgencies and revolutions, protest policing has received very little attention in the research on contemporary social movements in both Western democracies and in studies on police. Charles Tilly's influential theoretical work mentioned the relevance of governmental repression for social movements (Tilly 1978: in particular 101-106), but studies on the relationship between police and protest are still rare. Moreover, in the vast literature on the police, police behavior during protest activities is dealt with only in terms of the extreme case of riot control. To my knowledge, neither political theorists nor law experts have considered how protest affects the understanding of democracy and citizens' rights. I hope to fill this gap, but also to indicate possible solutions for problems related to the research on political opportunities.

Protest policing, political opportunities, and cultural understanding

Focusing on an in-depth analysis of one single variable can be a promising alternative to the dangerous trend of increasing the number of variables in the definition of the POS. While the first studies in the 1980s on political opportunities focused on a few variables[1] several scholars have referred to the concept of political opportunity structure in a number of case studies and cross-national comparisons, often adding new variables to the original set (in particular, Brand

1985; Kitschelt 1986; Rucht 1989; Kriesi 1991). These theoretical efforts have enlarged the explanatory capacity of the concept but reduced its specificity. The result is a complex but non-parsimonious model. Especially in cross-national comparative studies, it is almost impossible to handle such a high number of variables and assess their explanatory power properly. Focusing on an in-depth analysis of a single contextual variable would allow, instead, a better understanding of the interactions between social movements and their environment.

A second advantage of research on protest policing is that it addresses a variable which has *a most direct impact on social movements*. This helps address additional problems related with the study on POS. The distance between the variables indicated, as part of the political structure and the assumed effect on social movements, is so great that it is difficult to show the logical connections between the values of the independent variable and the (presumed) effects on the movements. As Koopmans (1990) observed, movements do not react to abstract categories (such as electoral volatility) but to a limited set of their derivates -- so far, that has not been properly singled out. I suggest that protest policing is indeed one of these "derivates" of political opportunities that have a direct impact on social movements. Indeed, protest policing is a barometer of the available POS. As part of the state response to social movements, it should be very sensitive to the relevant opportunities and constraints, and therefore represent a general expression of the state's degree of openness or receptivity. By studying protest policing, we can better understand the effect of the numerous indicators of the POS. Not only is protest policing a barometer because it is sensitive to political opportunities, but my research on radical groups in Italy and Germany indicated that movement

activities consider protest policing as one of the best and most "visible" indicators of institutional attitudes to protest (della Porta 1992).

Even if protest policing is not the only state response to protest, I assume it has a very relevant effect on social movements, and, in particular, on *movements' behavior*.[2] By focusing on one single characteristic of social movements I hope to overcome another problem of POS studies, the lack of clarity about the *explanandum*. The available POS has been investigated in order to explain a growing number of dependent variables, ranging from movement mobilization capabilities (Eisinger 1973) to movement effects (Tarrow 1983) to movement dynamics (Kitschelt 1986) to movement strategies (Kriesi 1991). I assume that protest policing is the single variable that has a most direct effect on a specific characteristic a collective action: protest behavior. I am not concerned here with the emergence or strength of the movements, but with their form and development. In particular, I assume that protest and police tactics (as described by McAdam 1983) adapt to each other through a process of reciprocal influence, involving innovation and adaptation.

A last choice in my research was to consider not only actual protest policing, but also the *cultural understanding* influencing both police strategies and their consequences. While empirical research on the perceptions of all components of the POS would be very difficult to carry out, I believe that the study of framing processes on protest policing is not only feasible, but necessary and particularly promising. First of all, the same focus on protest policing reflects my persuasion that this part of the state response to protest has an important effect on the activists' understanding of available political opportunities. Second, even a very first look at the effect of protest policing shows that they are "mediated" by cultural variable. Specifically about repression, Tilly ha stressed the need to "distinguish between

the volume and type of repressive activity, on the one hand, and its *symbolic significance*, on the other hand" (1978:104, emphasis added). Third, the political discourse on protest policing is especially important for various political and social actors. When "how to police protest" becomes a relevant policy choice about which several actors contended, the very framing of the issue becomes the subject of bitter disputes. Unlike most other crimes, "disturbing the public peace" (and political crimes in general) have only a very vague jurisprudential definition (e.g., see Roach and Thomanek 1985). Whether a protest action is defined as a citizen right or a "disturbance of the public" has a vital effect on the legitimation of the different actors. The question of what does and does not constitute a legitimate form of protest in a democracy is a "hot" topic endlessly debated by protestors and police, parties and policy-makers, media and experts. During the peak of collective mobilization, protestor rights and police rights are a controversial topic polarizing allies and opponents of the social movements. Fourth, while the single issues and claims change in the various protest cycles, the policing of protest is an always present "meta"-issue. Studying the evolution of frames on protest policing allows us to analyze cultural changes over a long time span.

The styles of protest policing

In presenting some questions and hypotheses referring to the policing of protest in Italy and Germany, as well as more generally in contemporary Western democracies, the first task is to describe the techniques police used and use to control protest. For this description we need a classification that goes beyond an oversimplified categorization of policing styles as either "tough repressive" or "tolerant control."

Two approaches to classify the forms and nature of state control have already appeared in the social movement literature. In a more phenomenological approach, Gary Marx (1979) distinguished repressive actions according to their specific aims: the creation of an unfavorable public image, information, restricting a movement's resources and limiting its facilities, de-recruitment of activists , destroying leaders, fuelling internal conflicts, encouraging conflicts between groups and sabotaging particular actions. Charles Tilly's typology (1978) does not deal with repressive actions per se but more generally with political regimes, which he classifies according to the degree of repression and "facilitation" they manifest towards various collective actors and actions. This approach yields four types of political regimes: repressive regimes,which repress many groups and actions while facilitating few of either; totalitarian regimes, which repress fewer groups and facilitate a wide range of actions, even to the point of making them compulsory; tolerant regimes, which accept a wide range of actions, but reduce the power of the stronger groups; and weak regimes, which have a wide range of tolerance and little repression or facilitation.

For my purposes, Gary Marx's list of repressive forms appeared too phenomenological for an attempt to trace evolutionary trends, and Tilly's typology of political regimes was too general for a comparison of Western democracies. While acknowledging that several institutions and political actors do "respond" to protest, I wanted to concentrate on one single actor: the police. I therefore formulated some new classifications, including the following dimensions: (1) "repressive" versus "tolerant," according to the range of prohibited behaviors; (2) "selective" versus "diffuse," according to the range of groups subject to repression; (3) "preventive" versus "reactive," according to the timing of police intervention; (4) "hard" versus "soft," according to the degree of force involved; (5) "dirty"

versus "lawful," according to the degree to which respect for legal and democratic procedures is emphasized.

On some methodologic choices and the status of this paper

My research on protest policing in Italy and West Germany after the Second World War combined historical and cross-national comparison, due to my interest in both longitudinal changes and national characteristics. An historical approach would help analyze the complex process of "institutionalization" of protest repertoires. The cross-national comparison is particularly important since past research has indicated the existance of distinct national strategies of conflict resolution while simultaneously the growing cross-national flow of information (between governments and between movement activists) allows us to assume an international convergence of techniques and frames for protest policing.

The following discussion presents some first thoughts from an empirical research on protest policies in the two countries. Although based mainly on a qualitative analysis of secondary sources, the ongoing research project includes a series of case studies of police handling of violent demonstrations.[3] On critical events and time-limited campaigns relevant to protest policing, I am collecting information based on newspaper reports, debates on public order laws in parliament, and publications printed in both movement and police presses.[4] Although the results of this part of the project are not yet complete (and therefore are not systematically analyzed here), several remarks come from the case studies. In this sense, my hypotheses are intermediate between the more general thought on which research proposals are normally based and the systematically "proven" results of an empirical, qualitative research based on case studies.

THE POLICING OF PROTEST IN ITALY

In Italy, the style of protest policing has changed dramatically over the last four decades, as can be seen by observing developments in five different periods roughly coinciding with (1) the repressive '50s, (1) the years of Center-Left governments in the '60s, (3) the years characterized by the "strategy of tension" (first half of the '70s), (4) the "emergency period" (second half of the '70s), and (5) the moderate '80s.

The repressive '50s

Throughout the '50s, protest policing was characterized by a hard repression of several political groups and forms of collective action.[5] One of the few book on the Italian police notes that "The primary means of keeping public order was the use of firearms by policemen against protestors, strikers, peasants who occupied land, etc." (Canosa 1976:181). The fact that almost 100 demonstrators died in the '40s and '50s when police charged go-ins and sit-ins using firearms is a grim testament to the truth of this statement.[6] The laws on public order as well as some organizational changes in the police forces favored this hard and diffuse style of protest policing. As for the legislative asset, the body of law regulating public security (which was a legacy of the fascist regime[7]) gave large power to the police. Moreover, in 1948, a new law allowed for the immediate arrest of protesters who blocked traffic, and the "Regulations on the Territorial and Garrison Service" gave the police greater latitude in using firearms against protest gatherings whenever the officer leading a police intervention thought there was a "threat to public order." The "Regulations" stated that: "Fire should be addressed directly against those who look most dangerous, who incited others to violence, against the leaders of the demonstrators" (in *Vie Nuove* 1969:14).[8] Organizationally, a hard and diffuse

repression was facilitated by the purging of police forces of left-wingers and former partisans, and the establishment of their direct dependency on the national executive branch. As members of a militarized body, policemen were not allowed to form or join a trade union. They received no special training in crime control, and had poor equipment. Training was primarily physical, military, and oriented to repressing mass disorder.

The style of policing reflected more general characteristics of the party system and the political culture. The first post-war governments in Italy based their plans for political and economic reconstruction on low wages and the exclusion of the working class from power, with the consequent repression of the trade unions and the communist party (the PCI). The governments considered preserving public order the police's primary task. In parliament, the Left often called for reforms to reduce such police power as the *fermo di polizia* (the right to keep "suspect" or "dangerous" people under arrest without permitting them access to a judge or a lawyer). Public opinion and the press were internally divided along the traditional Left-Right cleavage. In a polarized political system, the Right considered most protesters to be communists and puppets of Moscow, and the Left denounced police misconduct (especially against former partisans) as systematic persecution of the political opposition.

The contradictions of the Center-Left

If a repressive policing of protests prevailed through the '50s, by the time the student movement developed the climate was quite different. In the '60s, protest policing became less repressive and softer: from 1963 to 1967 not a single demonstrator was killed. Police handling of student protest, however, was quite contradictory, mixing tolerance and hard tactics. In general, during the early years

of the student movement, the police took a much "softer" approach to the control of protest than it had in the past when confronting other social groups. The police often tolerated spontaneous protest marches and the occupation of public buildings, and did not resort to firearms to disperse demonstrators. At times of particular tension, however, the more traditional forms of protest control resurfaced (see Canosa 1976:cap. 4). At the end of the '60s, when protest exploded, the police again abandoned restraint -- in 1968, three people were killed during marches organized by trade unions; another three were killed in demonstrations in 1969.

The contradictions in protest policing reflected those in the political system. In 1962, a Center-Left government had been formed, joining the Socialist Party with the Christian Democracy (LC) and a few minor parties. The reformist Center-Left governments took a more liberal position towards civil and political rights than their Centrist predecessors, and oversaw a series of new laws.[9] Student protest, however, polarized the political spectrum and public opinion. The Left -- including the PCI, the PSI, the trade unions, and the left-wing press -- openly supported the students, often accusing the police of brutality. While the DC was internally divided, right-wing pressure groups, including elements in the press, called for the use of "hard-line" tactics against the lazy and/or "red" students. At the same time, the Socialists proposed a radical reform, including the disarmament of the police, and even a few Christian-Democrats criticized the hard line chosen by their party. Beyond "visible politics," right-wing forces acted underground, planning coups d'Etat and using the secret services to blackmail the Left.[10]

A "strategy of tension"

In the early '70s, the state responded to the radicalized left-wing movements with a use of police force that on several occasions reverted to the most brutal traditions of the '50s. Protest policing continued to mix more tolerant tactics -- which produced a well-developed system of bargaining between police leadership and movement leadership -- with an increasing use of hard repression. Although the police did not use firearms, the tactics for control of mass demonstrations encouraged escalation, especially when large police squads charged the demonstrators with jeeps and squat candles (Canosa 1976:274-85). The list of protestors who lost their lives during police charges at public demonstrations grew in the early '70s. Between 1970 and 1975, policeman killed seven people -- protestors and passers-by -- during police intervention at political gatherings (Canosa 1976:274-85). In these incidents, the victims did not fall under police fire as in the '50s, but were beaten to death with clubs, crushed under police jeeps, or hit by squat candles.

The shift in protest policing corresponded to a change in the party system. The crisis of the Center-Left governments strengthened the hard-liner position. At the beginning of the '70s, a more conservative coalition had replaced the previous one. Although there was some reform, it was widely believed in the Left that several of those in power were ready to use any means to block political changes. The repression was perceived as directed in general against the Left, so the Old Left and the trade unions sided with the social movements in denouncing state repression and fascist aggression. Public opinion was increasingly polarized, and the political discourse increasingly inflamed. Confronted with a strong and violent radical Right and a radicalized New Left, the more conservative political forces demanded a policy of law and order to contain the "opposite extremisms." And the

new Center-Right coalition used right-wing terrorism and a wave of organized and petty crime as a rationale to pass new, restrictive laws on public order (Pasquino 1990).[11] The relations between protesters and the police only worsened with time. While the fights between the movements' militants and neo-fascists triggered the escalation of political conflicts (della Porta 1991), widespread rumors of complicity between police officials and right-wing militants undermined the confidence of the left-wing public in the state. Claims that the secret service protected the radical Right were particularly frequent in the period of the *stragismo* -- the "strategy" of massacres perpetrated by right-wing terrorism.[12] The strategy to control protest came to be widely known as the "strategy of tension" -- the government's covert manipulation of the radical political groups to incite outbursts so as to induce public opinion to favor authoritarian policies.

The "Years of Emergency"

The strategy of protest policing changed again the mid-70s, when it was characterized by the harsh repression of increasingly violent movement groups. With the decline of mobilization, the "dirty" tactics were partially abandoned.[13] Right-wing radicals lost their institutional protection: for a few years they fell into an organizational crisis, emerging after 1977 with a strategy of attacking the state and engaging in daily brutal -- sometimes deadly -- fights with the radical Left. In the radicalized climate of the terrorist emergency, police forces intervened to break up the often violent marches. As the first information I collected from the press on some protest campaigns in the spring of 1977 indicated, police tactics seemed inappropriate to control most of the violence that flared in demonstrations. First of all, the police resorted to firearms to cope with radical activists armed with P38 revolvers. Second, the police would charge an entire march, hitting peaceful

demonstrators as well as militant ones. Third, often armed cover agents were also present and, according to press reports, on a few occasions they fired against the protestors. Fourth, the police intervened in large units and tried to overcome with numbers their deficiencies in armaments and technical expertise. To discourage attempts to defy the frequent prohibitions against public gatherings, the police and the army joined together in military occupation of larger Italian cities.

The hard-line on protest policing, as well as its larger selectivity, reflected some political characteristics of the period. Protest policing represented the institutional and symbolic effects of the most dramatic wave of terrorist attacks. Terrorism and street crime shocked the public, and only small minorities criticized the institutional and police strategies for dealing with violent protest. During these "years of emergency," public order policies and internal security policies were in fact intertwined (della Porta 1992). If this climate pushed for hard policing, the PCI's "historic compromise" -- its proposal for cooperation between "Catholic and Communist masses" -- and its 1978 and 1979 support of the Christian Democrat-led national governments probably reduced the influence of the more conservative forces on the government. In their search for legitimation, the communists gave up their position as defenders of citizens' rights, so that choices of hard repression found little challenge. While increasing conflicts among the ruling parties and parliamentary instability worsened the government's capacity for implementing a coherent policy[14], the fight against terrorism became a unifying aim. Identified as "terrorists" or "sympathizers for terrorism," the radical activists became scapegoats. Both the government and the parliamentarian opposition defined most protest as dangerous "disorder." The emergency laws,[15] designed to fight terrorism, constrained protest as well, in so far as they could be (and were) used against the radical wings of the movements.[16] Although the government of

national unity was a sign of a depolarization in the political system, for social movement activists Italy was recast in the image of an authoritarian state by the emergency legislation as well as the frequent death of demonstrators by police charges. Consequently, the period 1977-79 came to be known as the "years of lead" -- grey, heavy, and difficult.

The "national reconciliation"

The style of protest policing changed in the '80s so dramatically that it seems inexplicable until one realizes how profoundly terrorism had shocked both the movement organizations and state apparati. The disbanding of the radical groups made hard repressive measures superfluous. The decline of terrorism brought calls for a "national reconciliation," including a revision of the emergency legislation.[17] The implementation of long overdue police reform contributed to a change in police practice and an understanding of the external reality.[18] These changes were manifested in a more tolerant attitude towards the peace movement in the decade's beginning, and the other movements later on. In the '80s, the policing of protest thus became extremely "soft" and very selective. According to the information from the press, when the tiny groups of surviving radical *Autonomi* tried to disrupt the large marches of the peace movement, police intervention was usually aimed to keep the "troublemakers" under control. According to one interview with a nonviolent activist, the nonviolent movement organizations informally collaborated with the police in order to avoid escalations. The policing of acts of civil disobedience also became more tolerant. In only a few cases did "hard" police repression escalate the conflict (for instance, when police charged peace movement demonstrators staging sit-ins at a Sicilian nuclear missile base site in Comiso). Institutional reactions against the nonviolent techniques of some

movement organizations primarily involved the judiciary. But when the nonviolent activists on trial for breach of peace criticized the judicial system, it was not to decry repressiveness but to complain that the judges were too inclined to "bargaining."[19]

Also in this period, protest policing reflected some characteristics of the political system. At the beginning of the '80s, the first governments with non-Christian Democratic prime ministers in the republic's history signalled willingness to change, and the governmental parties insisted on a new image of "efficacy." In the same period, the PCI, once again in the opposition, became more receptive to protest activities. To stop a steady electoral decline and reach a broader range of voters, the party tried to shed its image as "the working class party" and presented itself as a "point of reference for the progressive forces in the society." The XXth Congress of the PCI in February 1991 thus became the First Congress of the Democratic Party of the Left, at which the party declared itself open to "all the leftist, progressive, alternative, environmental forces." The issues championed by the new movements -- in particular, peace and ecology -- did not polarize the press. Movement speakers were given space to present their opinions, and the movements' action repertoires, now emphasizing nonviolence, were rarely criticized. The political discourse on law and order and internal security became quite moderate and pragmatic, even during the campaigns on such symbolic topics as amnesty for former terrorists.

THE POLICING OF PROTEST IN GERMANY

In Germany as in Italy, the policing of protest underwent a variety of changes in the past four decades. We can observe some parallels and some differences with concurrent conditions in Italy. I divide the 40 years into five main periods: (1) the conservativism of the Adenauer Era (the '50s and early '60s); (2) the contradictions of the Grand Coalition (the late '60s); (3) the reformism of Chancellor Willy Brandt (beginning of the '70s); (4) a partial conservative rollback under Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (the '70s); and (5) the larger tolerance but also the few escalations of the '80s.

The conservatism of the Adenauer Era

Compared to the Italian case, protest policing in Germany in the '50s was generally more selective and (relatively) less hard. The police handling of protest was characterized by a frequent but not brutal use of force to implement the prohibitions against public marches.[20] According to recent research, before the student movement emerged the German police had "an image of any gathering of people as potentially destructive, an irrational 'formation of a mob,' from which a danger to the state order could rapidly develop. The orientation to such an understanding of demonstration kept the executive and the judiciary loyal to a pre-democratic equipment of control by the state and the police" (Busch, et al., 1988, 319). Any potential threat to public order -- including disruption of traffic -- tended to be considered as sufficient rationale to prohibit public demonstrations. Although in the early '50s the police charged marches against rearmament and on labor issues, killing two protestors (on May 11, 1952 and May 1, 1953), they rarely used force in the handling of later industrial conflicts. In these years, state control

of protest relied instead on a frequent intervention of the judiciary[21] and the outlawing of neo-nazi groups and the Communist party.

The state strategies were influenced by some internal and international political features. Inside the Federal Republic, the relative strength of the trade unions in the factories and of the SPD in some states dissuaded the conservatives in the federal government from making greater use of police force. The attempt by the police to regain legitimacy among the population in the new democracy was probably another check on hard line intervention, as was the fear that claims of police brutality could stir up bitter memories of the Weimar Republic and the Nazi regime. But the very existence of the German Democratic Republic and the division of Berlin provided a rationale for a judiciary repression of the opposition, including the outlawing of the communist party in 1956.

The Grand Coalition

At the time the student movement evolved, protest policing included a mixture of "hard" and "soft" tactics, which was particularly visible in the long protest campaign in Berlin. In the beginning, student protest was tolerated, but the claim of "disturbing the pedestrian traffic" sometimes produced police charges on student marches in the city center, in line with the tradition of the previous period. Altogether, the police tended to avoid physical repression, and were criticized for it in the right-wing press until the state government (and SPD's mayor) pressured the police to intervene more forcefully. The conflict escalated on June 2, 1967, when a policeman killed a student, Benno Ohnesorg, during a protest against the visit to Berlin of the Shah of Iran. According to several reports (*Kursbuch*, 1968; Sack 1984), police tactics triggered an escalation of the conflict. In what was called "an exercise for an emergency," the Berlin police resorted to the tactic

known as the "sausage": pushing a crowd of demonstrators on its flank so that the protesters were forced to move to a place where the police could charge them.

The protest policing of the student movement reflected and simultaneously contributed to the changes in the German party system and public opinion in the second half of the '60s. When the student movement emerged, the SPD had joined the conservative CDU-CSU in a government called the Grand Coalition. Part of the federal government for the first time after World War II, the SPD, pushed both by its coalition partners and its search for legitimation, took a fairly negative attitude towards the student movement. Because of their general mistrust of disorders, the majority of the Old Left did not trust the students and opposed their strategy of "restricted rule-breaking." Generally, the political elites in power felt seriously challenged by the radical stance of the protest, while -- partly in result of the the CDU-CSU coalition with the Social Democrats -- the radical Right simultaneously won more votes. The conservative press (and especially the *Bild*, the scandal-mongering daily with a large Berlin circulation) launched campaigns against students whom they labeled as "puppets of the communist regimes," "infiltrated by East-German secret service," and "violent anarchists." Particularly in the peculiar position of West Berlin, the student activists experienced a Pogrom-like climate, a violent rejection by part of the population. At the same time, however, the students gained sympathies and sparked the formation of civil rights coalitions which eventually but favorably influenced the members of the Old Left. When the police and the students confronted each other, both the press and public opinion split on opposite judgments. The liberal press criticized police intervention, singling out some episodes of police brutality as a sign that German society was not yet fully democratized. So the shock of the death of Benno Ohnesberg led the Social-Democratic mayor of Berlin to resign, and intensified the

internal conflicts of the SPD. Even among police, there was growing criticism of the more repressive politics of the previous years and demands for greater democracy. One of the most long-lasting results of the late '60s was that "the ways of reciprocal behaviours of the state powers and the protestors became a theme of great relevance in the public discussion: The marches and their control by the police became a political issue" (Busch, et al. 1988:318).

The reformist years

The policing of protest changed radically at the beginning of the '70s, becoming extremely tolerant and soft. As Busch and his colleagues (Busch et al. 1988:320) observed, "In the administration of justice the opinion tended to prevail that demonstrations should not only be tolerated, but that, as active citizen rights, they must take priority over concerns about executive order. The intervention of the police -- until now oriented to fight violent troublemakers with closed units -- had to be rethought according to the 'principle of the flexible reaction' and through an intervention suitable to the specific situation, designed to avoid the escalation of conflict and violence." New police strategies developed with the precise aim of avoiding escalation. For example, the Berlin police created a *Diskussionkommando*, composed of small groups of policemen, in uniform but without arms, who spoke with activists during demonstrations, trying to convince them to avoid violence (Hübner 1979:212). In Munich, the police leadership -- after the new model elaborated by the "study-group for politological research on communication" -- sent policemen in uniform to "discuss" with the demonstrators and "convince" them to avoid illegal actions (Malptricht 1984:83-85). An effect of the choice of "softer" police police tactics was no deaths occurring during political marches throughout the entire decade.

The tolerant turn in protest policing coincided with a change in government which was itself partly a result of the student movement. In 1969, the SPD-CDU coalition broke up, replaced by a Social Democratic coalition with the liberal FDP. The shift produced a much more open attitude towards protest. Adopting the slogan "to dare more democracy," Brandt's government introduced reformist politics, meeting the demands for a more liberal understanding of the right to demonstrate.[22] One of the first, highly symbolic actions of the Social Democratic-Liberal coalition was to grant amnesty to those involved in the student unrests. Then, on May 22, 1970, criminal law was liberalized to allow the right to demonstrate, and the *Landsfriedensbruchparagraphen*, the law regulating the crime of "breach of peace" was abolished. The terrorist actions of 1972 and CDU-CSU's aggressive electoral campaign in the same year marked the beginning of another shift: a partial reversal of the recently liberalized protest. In response to the accusation of being unfit to contain the "radical extremists," the SPD-FDP government issued the *Radicalenerlaß*(January 1972) which was designated to concretize and unify the various procedures developed by the different states to block civil service access to individuals with "anti-constitutional" attitudes. The *Radicalenerlaß* thus increased the control over those who applied for civil service positions. Although actual exclusions were rare,[23] the symbolic effect was quite strong, and many saw Germany again as an authoritarian state. Moreover, police interventions to arrest terrorists often did result in casualties, and thus criticism (see Böll, et al. 1976). In the movements in particular, criticism of the state's authoritarianism intensified when the imprisoned terrorists staged hunger strikes to call attention to their harsh living conditions -- particularly the high-security units and isolation -- which several defined as inhuman.

Conservative roll-back?

Although the more tolerant attitudes towards protest that had evolved in the early '70s (and had almost completely eliminated violence from the political conflicts) did not entirely disappear, the mid-'70s represented a new turning point. Especially in the handling of the anti-nuclear protest, which often involved the occupation of sites where nuclear plants had to be built, the police deviated from the more tolerant behavior of previous years. According to some recent studies (Busch, et al. 1988:328-341), the police strategy was based on very large preventive interventions, and (tendentially) selective use of physical force against the more militant wing of the movements. Usually, the police forces' first move was to make the nuclear sites difficult to penetrate from outside -- through water cannons and building high protective walls, for instance. They then prohibited marches and imposed restrictions on the routes the marches could follow and the clothes demonstrators could wear, guided by the principles of extensive control and preventive action.[24] But the lessons of the '60s were not completely forgotten; in order to avoid escalation, prohibitions were often not enforced. Moreover, the police avoided frontal attacks on demonstrations, and tried to develop techniques for a focused repression of the more violent groups. Even in instances where police did use physical force, particularly in fights with the more radical wing of the antinuclear movement, nobody was killed (Busch, et al. 1988:341-2). All things considered, the tactics the police used in the '70s were much more selective and much less "escalating" compared to those used in the '60s. In comparison with the larger tolerance of the early '70s, however, they became clearly harder and more repressive.

A more repressive handling of the protest reflected the changes produced in the political system when the economic crisis of the early '70s undermined the

reformist attitudes of the government. In fact, after Chancellor Brandt was forced to resign after a scandal involving an East Germany spy, the re-elected FDP-SPD federal coalition -- now led by Helmut Schmidt -- revised its slogans and programs, concentrating on the defense of the welfare state and abandoning its more ambitious reform projects. In the second half of the '70s, only a minority within the Social Democratic party cooperated (although with some friction) with movement organizations on issues of nuclear energy, ecology, women's liberation, and disarmament. Faced with two waves of terrorist attacks, in Germany as well as Italy, protestors were often assimilated with dangerous criminals. On the other side, a radicalization of frames affected also the movement activists. Even relatively "soft" police intervention had a negative symbolic effect, for the political discourse had changed since the '60s. The more aggressive handling of protest, together with changes in legislation concerning civil rights,[25] fostered the image of an authoritarian state in the minds of movement activists. A massive number of house searches and the erection of street barricades to capture fugitive terrorists intensified the liberal citizens' sense that civil and political rights were threatened. Among movement activists, the impression of increasing authoritarianism -- even a re-nazification of the German state -- was also reinforced by the isolation of terrorists in prison, the government's hard line towards those terrorists who undertook hunger strikes (two of whom eventually died), and the suicide in prison of four RAF members. Terrorism and anti-terrorism had therefore the effect of polarizing the political culture and, then, "dramatizing" the frames used by authorities and movement activists to evaluate the presumed dangers of protest and repression respectively.

Bargaining and escalation in the '80s

At the beginning of the '80s, protest policing changed again, and the peace movement met with less resistance than the anti-nuclear movement had in the '70s. Protest policing became more selective, with a large tolerance for non-violent repertoires and a stricter control of the radical wing of social movements. Although terrorism continued to be an issue, the "years of lead" were over. My studies of police intervention in Berlin in the '80s seem to indicate that the police looked for tactics that could avoid escalation, and that peacekeeping now clearly took priority over law enforcement. The police experimented with new tactics oriented mainly at isolating the violent wing of a demonstration rather than attacking non-violent as well as violent protestors, and containing rather than charging potentially dangerous demonstrators (using police barriers or military isolation of areas where radicals held their meetings). These new tactics evolved partly from technical changes within the police forces, specifically the reorganization of the units specializing in maintaining public order into smaller and more mobile sub-units, and the introduction of new and more sophisticated equipment, such as protective helmets, fireproof clothes, armored trucks, and CN and CS gas. At the same time, they reflected also some cultural changes in the police itself. First of all, the frames of demonstrators as "puppets of the communist regimes" had been substituted by frames of violent individuals as psychologically weak individuals (della Porta 1994). Second, the police seemed to increasingly take into account the reactions of public opinion and the media. More than once, police leaders asked the political forces to provide a political response to social protest. But despite social learning about how to avoid escalation, conflicts did escalate on some occasions: during the occupation of houses in Berlin at the beginning of the '80s; during the long campaign against the expansion

of the Frankfurt airport; in the protest against the proposed nuclear plant in Wackersdorf; and during the meeting of the World Bank Fund and the visit of President Reagan in Berlin in the late '80s.[26] The more violent confrontations evolved especially during symbolically important events, when police forces from the most disparate German states converged on Berlin, Frankfurt and Wackersdorf to keep law and order while the *Autonomen* called for national "happenings." Even if the police perfected techniques for isolating troublemakers, the dynamics of the physical confrontation often escalated into spirals of violence in which peaceful demonstrators or standers-by became involved. In these cases, police handling of protest was often perceived by the more moderate wing of the movements as repressive, hard, and diffuse. A massive deployment of police forces for preventive control of peaceful protest campaigns as well as a large number of charges against civil disobedience sometimes spoiled the tolerant climate of the '80s.[27]

Once again, we can observe that styles of protest policing reflected political circumstances. The '80s began with the crisis in the SPD-FDP federal government and the return of the CDU to government. But this did not harden police handling of protest, as one might have expected. The CDU reassured its more right-wing supporters with symbolic law-and-order campaigns. In 1985, for example, the national parliament passed a *Vermummungsverbot* prohibiting demonstrators from disguising themselves when taking part in public marches -- a law specifically directed against "Black Block" militants who attended demonstrations dressed in black clothes with balaclava helmets covering their faces. But essentially the CDU-FDP government maintained a tolerant attitude towards protest. With the decline of terrorism and the end of the economic recession of the '70s, political conflicts de-escalated. Although a new anti-terrorist law was passed in 1986

(following two assassinations by the RAF), in 1987 the Federal Office for the Defence of the Constitution unofficially offered to "help" those who abandoned the terrorist organization; in 1989 a new law on internal security reduced the penalties for terrorists who confessed; and in 1992 the Federal Minister of Justice, Klaus Kinkel, offered to free terrorists who were ill or imprisoned for a long time in exchange for an RAF declaration of a "suspension" of its armed attacks. A liberal understanding of demonstration rights prevailed also in the public opinion. The public's tolerance for hard line approaches increased when the demonstrators themselves resorted to even the "lightest" form of violence.

COMPARING STYLES OF PROTEST POLICING

Using available information, we have described the evolution of protest policing in the two countries. As mentioned, the available information is not sufficient for an accurate statement of the various characteristics of the single periods. With the limited aim of developing some hypotheses, I shall try to sketch a provisional comparison of both historical and cross-national similarities and differences. For Figure 1 (pag. 55) I used the five classifications of protest policing styles to summarize the information provided.

Comparing the two countries, in Italy several forms of protest were repressed for a longer time. This was particularly true in the early '70s; in the '80s, Italy had a more visible break with the previous "hard" style of protest policing than did Germany. Consistently in all periods, the police handling of protest seems to have been more selective in Germany than in Italy. Since the beginning, German police tended to intervene only very sporadically in the industrial conflicts, and repression focused especially on small political groups. In Italy,

especially in the '50s and early '70s, there was a "hard" police handling of larger groups, including the trade unions and the communist party. Moreover, the search for techniques of protest handling that could selectively address the violent groups developed earlier in Germany than in Italy. Only in the '80s did Italian police start to focus repression on the violent groups -- an attempt the German police had already started in the previous decade. While in Italy protest policing tended to involve a higher degree of force (at least until the '80s), in Germany protest policing was characterized by a greater dependence on intelligence (collection of information, etc.). We also observed that the Left often accused Italian police forces of resorting to what protestors considered dirty tactics, such as large and unconstrained use of *agents provocateurs*, the protection of Neofascists, and a direct involvement of the secret services in massacres and plotting coups d'Etat. Similar claims have been much less frequent in Germany, where the police seemed more constrained by a formal respect of the *Rechtstaat*. For this reason, we can also expect the German judiciary played a more important role than the Italian in the control of social movements.

In both countries, during the decades from 1950 to 1990, protest control evolved towards more flexible forms based on a more liberal understanding of demonstration rights. And in both countries, public order policies became more tolerant, more selective, more oriented towards prevention, more respectful of democratic procedures, and "softer." This evolution was hardly linear ("relapses" occurred in both countries when political conflicts escalated into violent forms). Over time, cross-national differences seem to diminish, probably because of international cooperation and cross-national flows of information involving both movement organizations and law enforcers.

PROTEST POLICING: AN ANALYTIC MODEL

The comparison of protest policing styles in Italy and Germany raises at least two very different questions. If we look at protest policing as a barometer of the POS, we should ask which of the political opportunities seem to have influenced the observed cross-national differences and historical changes in protest policing. If we look at protest policing as an intermediate level between political structures and social movements, we should ask which are the effects of the different policing styles on protest repertoires. Figure 2 (pag. 56) provides an outline of the different analytical levels that appear to be relevant for an analysis of protest policing as a "barometer" of political opportunities.

A first analytical level refers to the stable opportunities in which a certain style of policing develops -- that is, what Gamson and Meyer define in this volume as "some aspects of opportunities [that] are deeply embedded in political institutions and culture." First of all, I argue that *institutional features* -- police organization, the nature of the judiciary, law codes, constitutional rights, etc. -- play an extremely important role in defining the opportunities, and the constraints on, protest policing. To use MacAdam's distinction from his introduction, we can say that institutional or legal structure set the conditions for the actual strategies of protest policing. Moreover, following Brand (1985), Kitschelt (1986), and Kriesi (1991), we can assume that some aspects of the *political culture*, in particular those referring to the conceptions of the state and citizens rights, have similarly important effects.

In addition to the relatively stable context, policing styles depend on a second (more "volatile") analytical level: the shifting results of the interactions of

different actors. Various collective actors put forward their interests or opinions, forming what Kriesi (1989) refers to as configuration of power. First of all, social movements intervene on citizens' rights and police tasks -- they organize protest actions to denounce police brutality and they ask for more democracy. This means that social movements influence their environment, and the various characteristics of the POS. But social movements are not the only collective actors to take positions on protest policing. Political parties, interest groups, trade unions, and voluntary associations conflict or cooperate with them on how to police protest. Like-minded actors on each side of the issue form coalitions upholding, on the one hand, "law and order," and on the other, "civil rights" (see level 2 in Figure 2).

The actual protest policing as well as protest strategies are then influenced by the interactions *between protesters and the police* (the third level in Figure 2). Protesters and the police, social movements and the state, influence each other in the strategic choices they make, in a process involving innovation and adaptation on both sides.

STABLE OPPORTUNITIES AND PROTEST POLICING

In this and in next two parts, I shall put forward some hypotheses on all the mentioned analytic levels, starting with the stable opportunities. In his distinction of an "input" and an "output" structure, Herbert Kitschelt (1986:61-64) emphasizes the relevance of the constitutional features. Looking at a less formalized but still "stable" political opportunity, Kriesi applied the similar concept of national strategies of conflict resolution to social movements, elaborated in the analysis of

the industrial conflicts.[28] He notes, "National strategies set the informal and formal rules of the game for the conflict" (1989, 295).[29]

An hystorical and cross-national comparative perspective seems to indicate that protest policing is indeed "constrained" by some long-lasting institutional characteristics. As for the *constitutional features,* the German case seems to indicate that a formally open political system sometimes favors the movements, but sometimes their opponents instead. As for the effects of federalism and decentralization of power, the local governments often implemented a different police style than that defended by the federal government -- sometimes softer and sometimes harder repression. For example, in the policing of the anti-nuclear movement, the CDU state governments often adopted confrontational politics jeopardizing SPD-FDP coalition negotiation attempts in the federal government. After a few minor incidents in 1975, the conflict escalated in Brokdorf in 1976, in northern and traditionally Christian Democratic Sclewsig Holstein, when the movement organizations (*Burgerinitiativen*) threatened to occupy the site of a projected nuclear plant if the authorities began building without waiting for the administrative court decision. As it happened, the FDP-SPD federal government -- supportive of the nuclear projects -- hoped to negotiate with the *Burgerinitiativen*, but the states government called for a resolute intervention against the "small active minority" infiltrated by "extremists" (Busch, et al. 1988:321-2). Similarly, the strong judiciary power sometimes improved but sometimes worsened protest opportunities. Especially in the '80s, in several trials for breach of the peace, the defendants were acquitted and police accusations rejected, and on occasion administrative courts refused police prohibitions against public demonstrations. But in some cases, the courts used a principle of indirect responsibilities, ordering

the convenors or leaders of some protest event to pay for the damages produced by others during public marches that turned violent.

Of course, other laws besides constitutional codes influence protest policing. In particular, our description suggests that *the legislation on public order and demonstrations, police rights, and citizen rights* affects the choice of protest policing. For example,[30] militarization of the police appears conducive to a "hard" strategy of repression (as in the Italian case, until the '80s), whereas professionalization and access to technical means encourage the use of more sophisticated forms of control, which in turn reduce the necessity of resorting to force (as in the German case). The degree to which the judiciary can control police behaviors also helps determine the forms protest policing will take. In Germany, for instance, the possibility of protestors appealing to the Administrative Court to reverse police decisions prohibiting demonstrations was a de-escalating factor.

Traditions are embedded not only in laws but also in the political culture. As Zald mentioned in his introduction, the movements as well ad their adversaries, draw their frames on a cultural stock, that define -- among other things -- how to protest and how to control protest. Protest policing seems to be particularly sensitive to *the cultural understanding of civil rights and police power*.[31] A brief look at the national political culture of each country provides some illustration. The "dirty repression" that often characterized the reactions of the Italian state -- contributing to the escalation of the political conflict and the growth of terrorism -- was consistent with a mentality geared to conspiracies, to the idea of a Machiavellian "state of the Prince." In Germany, the constant reference to both protestors and the state to the *Rechtsstaat* suggests why, unlike in Italy, even the "hard" strategies of police control of protest remained within the limits set by law. These different "master frames" of the role of the state had a particularly important

effect, since they were internalized by the police as well as the general population. Accordingly, Italians and Germans generally had very different ideas about the proper roles and responsibilities of the police. As Peter Katzenstein observed in his study on security policy, in Germany "the normative order in which the police operates is shaped by a German tradition that grants the state the position of a prepolitically accepted, rather than a politically contested, order . . . . The West German police thus views itself as a part of a normative order that accepts the rule of the law . . . ." (1990:1). At the same time, the constitutional definition of the German democracy as a "militant democracy" -- a democracy that can suspend some civil rights in order to save democracy itself (Finn 1991) -- justified the legal prosecution of several forms of protest and the frequent call for outlawing one of the movement organizations. The Italian police, in contrast, since the creation of the Italian state had been accustomed to seeing itself as the *longa manus* of the executive power, and thus put a preservation of law and order before the control of crimes. This tradition continued to play a role after World War II: "The refusal of DC ministers in 1949 to demilitarize the police reflected the view that the major function of the police was that of internal security of the state -- the preservation of public order -- rather than the prevention and investigation of crime and in these latter fields the police corp (Corpo delle guardie di pubblica sicurezza) has remained underdeveloped, lacking both expertise and equipment" (Furlong 1981:81).

In summary, institutions and political culture produce a *quite stable set of opportunities and constraints* on protest policing. Looking at single movements, it is probably true that this set of opportunities and constraints can be considered "stable." To use Kriesi's terms, our description suggests that historical traditions, or "national strategies," do indeed influence protest policing. First, both in Italy

and Germany the institutional and emotional legacy from prewar fascist regimes was reflected in *the lack of fully developed democratic cultures*. The state's lack of confidence in democratic protest combined with the protestors' lack of confidence in the democratic state institutions often resulted in escalations. Thus, protest was perceived by the institutions as a threat to democracy, and state reactions were perceived by the movement activists as a sign of fascism. Second, the strategies adopted after World War II to deal with the labor movement produced norms and institutions that affected the way future social movements were handled. Probably more than any other factor, Germany's adoption of a neo-corporatist model of industrial relations in the immediate postwar period was responsible for the state's relatively tolerant attitudes towards the social movements. In Italy, meanwhile, the fact that class conflict was not institutionalized in any way explains both the development of a large system of alliances between the Old Left and the movements, and the harsh repression they encountered in the '50s and again in the first half of the '70s. Third, both in Italy and Germany, the traditional techniques of the '50s often reemerged during times of crisis in the '60s, the '70s, and the '80s. As movement organizations -- McCarthy noticed -- adopt mobilizing forms that are known to them from direct experiences, also the police forces use the forms of disorder control with which they have more experiences.

Looking over several decades, we could observe that the legacy of the past does not last forever -- even the most stable conditions do change. If national strategies are reproduced by socialization processes, traumatic events can produce or accelerate learning processes which eventually institutionalize protest tactics, with the consequence of a "soft" police handling of these new tactics. When the movements first mobilize, the institutional actors deny legitimacy to the new protest tactics, and attack them as anti-democratic or criminal. In the short term, a

polarization in the political spectrum follows; in the long term, new forms of collective action become part of the accepted repertoires. From an historical perspective, this means that social movements do influence even the more stable institutions and deep-rooted political cultures.

CONFIGURATION OF POWER AND PROTEST POLICING

Stable institutional and cultural opportunities and constraints influenced the evolution of protest policing along the four decades. Besides the stable context, however, protest policing resulted from the interactions of various actors and the deriving "configuration of power." Following some recent studies of the POS (in particular, Kriesi 1990, and della Porta and Rucht 1992), I particularly believe that the position of the Left has an important effect on protest policing. In this part, I shall put forward some ideas on the preferences and attitudes of left-wing parties (and governments) on protest policing.

Protest policing and interest intermediation

Other political actors besides governments influence protest policing. Political parties, interest groups, and movement organizations express their preferences, addressing either their constituency, the public, or the policy makers directly. Often they use the mass media to voice their preferences: the protestors and their allies launch campaigns to denounce "brutal" repression and defend civil rights; the conservative groups push for law-and-order. The effects of these campaigns on protest policing could be various. On the one hand, the very fact that internal security policies are publicly discussed is a sign of a larger, democratic tolerance. On the other hand, hard-line policies are often implemented

in response to pressure exerted by law-and-order coalitions.[32] Two questions should be addressed: What strategies did the two coalitions -- the civil rights' defenders and the law-and-order proponents -- adopt in the two countries? What factors determined the temporary victory of one coalition or the other?

In my research, I've tried to answer these questions by systemically analyzing public statements in the mass media and in parliament, and by looking both at the actors who spoke up about protest policing issues and at their public discourse. Although preliminary, the first round of interviews has provided enough information to propose some ideas about the actors' strategies for influencing policy choices and about their public discourse on protest and the police, and reveal some historical trends and cross-national differences.

First, both in Italy and in Germany, *the position of the Old Left was particularly relevant for the vicissitudes of the civil rights coalition.* The power of the civil right coalition increased greatly when the Old Left joined it; conversely, it shrank dramatically when the Old Left responded instead to law-and-order discourses. In the latter case, the hard line of protest policing tended to prevail, as happened in both countries in the second half of the '70s. The mere presence of the Old Left, however, did not guarantee that the civil rights coalition would gain influence over actual policing. If the Old Left was in a marginal position in the party system (as was the case in both countries in the '50s and in Italy until the '80s), the "hard line" tended to prevail. When the Left was gaining power but was not yet in government, "dirty" forms of protest policing could predominate, as occurred in Italy in the early '70s.

Second, in both countries, *the law-and-order coalitions gained favor at times when the national political discourse was polarized.* When the conflict between the social movements and the state was presented as a zero-sum game

(often by both sides), public opinion tended to side with the state. But when political discourse became less polarized, and fear about the loss of law and order diminished, the demonstrators were gradually granted more rights. Criticism of policing strategies gained a larger audience, and greater influence, when framed in terms of improving an existing democracy rather than in terms of exposing signs of fascist conspiracies. In the early '70s in Germany and in both countries in the '80s, for instance, police tactics changed from one protest event to another, in response to previous criticisms in a larger and more "moderate" public opinion.

Third, I observed that the *"civil rights" coalition gradually grew over time, while the law-and-order coalition shrank*. In both countries, not only was there a consistent increase in the number of collective actors who felt they had a right to intervene on the policing issue, but more and more "neutral" actors -- such as members of professional associations -- came to criticize the police hard line while movement organizations specialized in legal defense and litigations.

A fourth and last observation can be briefly made: *the configuration of power between law-and-order and civil rights coalitions was influenced by the very forms of protest*. We observed in our account that radicalizations in protest forms brought new supporters to the law-and-order coalitions. In the second half of the '70s in both countries, the law-and-order coalitions gained sympathizers even in the Old Left during terrorist campaigns. The German experience indicates that the civil rights coalition weakened even when only a tiny minority of the movements chose violence. Conversely, the larger tolerance towards protest in the '80s could very well be a consequence of the moderation of protest tactics.

Protest policing and governments

Shifts in the policing of protest -- or techniques of repression -- have often been traced to changes in the makeup of the government. 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. Funk's study of internal security in Germany (1990), however, suggested that the main parties do *not* differ much from each other in their position on internal security policy.

The previous description of our two national cases seems to indicate that the policing of protest was an issue on which parties polarized along the traditional Left-Right cleavage. 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. In general, protest policing was "softer" and more tolerant when the Left was in government, whereas the conservative governments were inclined to use "harder" tactics. In Italy, for example, the Center-Left governments broke the tradition of allowing the police to shoot at demonstrators; in Germany, the first SPD-FDP governments developed a more tolerant style of protest policing, and also liberalized laws concerning public marches and citizens rights.

But it would be inaccurate to state that left-wing governments are *always* more tolerant of protest than conservative governments. Protest policing is, in fact, a tricky issue for left-wing governments. Left-wing governments often had to face difficult campaigns of law and order launched by the conservative opposition (as happened under Chancellor Brandt). Especially when the Left felt a need to legitimate itself as "fit-to-govern," it had to make concessions to the hard-line proponents of law-and-order. This compromises not only inevitably disappointed

social movement activists (usually to the advantage of the most radical wings), it also elicited internal criticism (usually from the trade-unionists). The experiences of the anti-nuclear campaign under Chancellor Schmidt in Germany and of the "government of national unity" in Italy clearly illustrate these dynamics. In Germany, the massive police intervention in the anti-nuclear conflict coincided with a conservative roll-back of the SPD-FDP federal government led by Helmut Schmidt. In the second half of the '70s in Italy, the PCI -- while supporting the national government "from outside" -- ceased calling for a softer strategy towards radical protest, thus losing several sympathetic supporters among movement activists. In both cases, the presence of violent, even terrorist, left-wing groups clearly helped embarrass the Left.

Just as left-wing governments are not automatically lenient towards protest, conservatives in power do not always implement repressive policies. The German CDU, back in power in the '80s, did not seem interested in an escalation of the political conflicts. The shift in the state government from the Left to the Right amidst the turmoil of the Berliner squatters' movement, for instance, did not interrupt the negotiations for a political solution, even though some incidents escalated into violence simply because the squatters anticipated a harder reaction by the conservative government (*Cilip*, 1981). Similarly, in Italy, when the PCI returned to a position of "full opposition" and the politics of a "national front to fight an emergency situation" was superseded, a more repressive strategy of protest policing did *not* ensue.

PROTEST POLICING AND THE POLICE

Protest policing is not only a consequence of stable opportunities and the configuration of power. To understand the choices of one style or another, we have to also consider the role of the bureaucracy that has to implement policy choices: the police. Research on the police usually emphasizes that they have a certain degree of discretion in the implementation of political decisions. Thus it seems important to examine how the police arrive at preferences either for carrying out or for resisting policies that might lead to escalation.

One hypothesis about police behavior holds that organizational *internal dynamics can sway the police to support the hard line in the control of the present.* That is, preferences for strict control of protest could develop from a particular socialization and training of police agents, as well as from a kind of internal dynamics within the repressive apparati. For instance, Gary Marx observes that agencies that deal with intelligence gathering and the prevention of crime or subversion have an inherent tendency to expand: "[Their] role can be defined in such a way as to create an appetite that can never be satiated" (1979, 112). Referring to the control of protest in the United States in the '60s and the '70s, he adds, "Factors that explain the origin of a phenomenon may not necessarily explain its continuance. Thus the origin of government programs for social movement intervention generally lies in events that most members of a society would define as a crisis or a serious threat. However, the programs can take on a life of their own as vested interests develop around them, and new latent goals may emerge. Rather than social control as repression, deterrence, or punishment, it can become a vehicle for career advancement and organizational perpetuation and growth. The management and even creation of deviance, rather than its elimination, can become

central" (1979:114). Control agencies would consequently produce political deviants. Indeed, internal dynamics such as those Marx describes might partly account for the "deviations" of the secret services that appeared so often in Italy, as well as for the "hard" intervention of "special squads" in both countries.

An additional hypothesis is that *the organizational characteristics of the police can lead to escalation during their interactions with demonstrators*. As Monjardet observes (1990:217, ff.), 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 (Monjardet 1990:233). Also, some much criticized "hard" interventions of the police in our two countries, which eventually led to escalations, happened during peaceful mass demonstrations "infiltrated" by small radical groups, when the handling of law and order required a difficult equilibrium between control of the radicals and respect of the rights of the moderates. Moreover, especially in Germany in the '80s, claims of police brutality often followed the authorities' decisions to deploy units from different states to police some protest events. In these cases, lack of coordination and a poor knowledge of the territory may have helped the conflict escalations, even when a strategy of de-escalation had been planned by the police leadership.[33] Some police tactics -- even some nonviolent ones -- are more difficult than others to keep under control and avoid escalations.

Although some conditions can bring the police to escalative tactics, our narratives seemed to indicate that escalation usually followed political choices for a confrontational handling of protest. Often it was the police who protested

against repressive choices, inviting politicians to give "political responses" to protest. This was particularly visible in Germany. In Berlin, during the student movement of the '60s as well as during the squatter movement of the '80s, the police leadership intervened in the political arena and in the media and stressed that protest requires a political rather than a police response (Sack 1984). In these instances, the main concern of the police was losing legitimation and popular support. The Italian police also showed signs of dissatisfaction with the deployment of massive police force at political gatherings, although their discontent was at first mainly related to their working conditions (for instance, their long hours; see letters of policemen, collected by Fedeli 1981). Only in the '70s, with the emergence of the police movement for demilitarization, did a concern for public legitimation also emerged among the Italian police (see autobiographies collected by Medici 1979). It therefore seems that the police tended to resist being involved in "hard" repression, especially when they feared a liberal public opinion would accuse them of partisan attitudes.

ESCALATION AND DE-ESCALATION: THE CONSEQUENCES OF PROTEST POLICING

We can turn now to the effects of protest policing on social movements, and in particular on protest tactics. The social science literature provides several hypotheses. Some scholars have stated that a reduction in repression facilitates the development of social movements. According to Skocpol (1979), social revolutions are triggered by political crises, which weaken the political control and the state's capacity for repression. McAdam (1982) also indicated that reduction in repression was a facilitating factor, specifically for the civil rights movement.

Moreover, a higher degree of repression was often associated with radical behavior on the part of the challengers. Goldstein concluded his comparative analysis on political repression in 19th century Europe by observing that "those countries that were consistently the most repressive, brutal, and obstinate in dealing with the consequences of modernization and developing working-class dissidence reaped the harvest by producing opposition that were just as rigid, brutal, and obstinate" (Goldstein 1983:340). Kitschelt (1985:302-303) hypothesized that an illiberal political culture will push movements to adopt antagonistic and confrontational positions.

Other scholars have reported less clear-cut outcomes. In a review of studies of the American protest movements in the '60s and '70s, Wilson (1976) observed that the empirical results are somewhat contradictory, indicating at some times a radicalization of those groups exposed to police violence, at other times their retreat from unconventional actions. To explain such differences, he suggested we take into account such variables as the level of repression, the degree of commitment to the protest issue, and the degree of popular support for both elites and challengers. Similarly, contradictory findings can be integrated into a more coherent explanation if one assumes a curvilinear relationship between the challengers' violence and the repressiveness of authorities (see Neidhardt 1989).[34]

A few hypotheses can be drawn from the description of the German and Italian cases, which come into focus if we relate the evolution of protest policing as reported above with the evolution of social movement repertoires as described in other studies (for instance, see della Porta and Rucht 1992). It seems that a more tolerant, selective and softer police behavior favors protest. Especially in Italy, the protest first emerged when more tolerant policing developed. In both countries, the state reacted to protest with a (transitory) increase in repression. The

harder repression of the mid-'70s coincided with the "return to the private sphere" -- or a political demobilization -- in social movements. In the '80s, when a tolerant police handling of protest developed, mobilization grew again in both countries.

A second hypothesis is that *more repressive, diffuse, and hard techniques of policing tend to, at the same time, discourage the mass and peaceful protest while fueling the more radical-fringe*. In Italy, for instance, radicalization processes in the movements coincided with a period of harder repression when the police again killed demonstrators at public marches. Moreover, the belief that the institutions were involved in a "dirty war" worsened the relationships between movement activists and state representatives. Conversely, the relative absence of radical strategies in Germany during the first half of the '70s reflected the reformist attitude of the social-liberal government and a tolerant, selective and "soft" protest policing. In both countries, the highest levels of repression coincided with a shrinking of the more politically oriented wing of the movements, a decline that indirectly helped the most radical behavior to prevail -- as was particularly the case in Italy in the '70s. The lower degree of violence during protest events in the '80s corresponded instead to an increasing tolerance for different forms of protest.

A last question refers to the *reciprocal adaptation of police and protestors' tactics*. We had previously observed that hard police tactics "coincided" with harder protest tactics. We also suggested that harder police tactics produced harder protest forms, to a certain extent. It should be added that the relationship between protesters and police does not have a unique causal determination -- we observed that protest tactics influenced the police tactics through interactive processes. For instance, the escalation of the anti-nuclear protest in Germany involved the ritualization of the conflicts between an increasing militant wing of activists and an increasingly aggressive police. On one side of the conflict, a

militant group began to organize, appearing at all the various protest events and pushing for direct confrontation; on the other side, the state police, bolstered by police units from different states, used massive intervention.[35] A similar ritualization of physical confrontations (on a larger scale) involved the Italian police and protestors all through the '70s. These interactive processes have to be taken into account to explain the dynamics of escalation.

A SUMMARY

In this paper, I focused on protest policing -- an important barometer of the political opportunities available for social movements. My ongoing cross-country and historical comparative project on protest policing in Italy and Germany after the Second World War provided some illustrations for several hypotheses on the characteristics, origins and consequences of protest policing.

Searching for a satisfactory description of different strategies of protest policing, I first distinguished the selectivity of intervention, referring to both the forms of collective action and the type of collective actors. I also considered the amount of force used, the timing of police intervention, and the emphasis on the "respect for lawful procedures" as opposed to tolerance for "dirty tricks." I used these classifications of police styles for a description of protest policing in the two countries over the past 40 years. I observed that police control has generally followed a trend towards more tolerant, selective, soft, preventive, and legal measures; but I also cautioned not to overlook important cross-national differences and reversals in the general trend.

In order to explain protest policing, I then tried to single out which of the variables mentioned in the studies on political opportunities have a more direct

impact on the police handling of protest, starting with the more stable institutional and cultural environment. In considering the role of institutions, I indicated the relevance of legislation on public order and demonstrations, police rights, and citizen rights. Apropos of the political culture, I emphasized the presence of different frames and political discourses referring to the state, civil rights, and police power. I observed that although the national strategies of Italy and Germany tended to survive, they underwent quite dramatic changes through the period we are analyzing.

To understand the evolution of protest policing, I looked at a second set of political opportunities: the (more volatile) configuration of power. Looking at the actors of interest intermediation -- political parties, pressure groups, and movement organizations -- I concluded that protest policing and tactics are particularly sensitive to the interactions of two opposing coalitions: civil rights, and law-and-order. Analyzing the interaction of the two coalitions, I observed that (1) the position of the Old Left had a pronounced effect on the strength of the civil rights coalition; (2) the law-and-order coalition gained strength and influence when the political discourse was most polarized; (3) the civil rights coalition gradually expanded while the law-and-order coalition shrank; and (4) the configuration of power between the civil rights and law-and-order coalition was influenced by protest tactics. Looking at the attitudes of different parties in government, I suggested that -- as expected -- the Left generally tended to take a more tolerant attitude toward protest than did the Right. But protest policing proved a delicate matter for leftist governments, for they were often pressured towards a hard line policy by law-and-order campaigns. In time, however, Left and Right moved closer together on this issue: in the '80s, even conservative governments had

become more tolerant of protest, probably reflecting a more tolerant attitude in the public opinion.

Eventually, protest policing is influenced by the preference of the bureaucracy that implements policy choices: the police. Although internal dynamics sometimes pushed the police to adopt a hard line, the fear of losing public support often brought the police to oppose using hard repressive tactics during protest events.

After looking at the causes of protest policing, I also proposed some hypotheses on its consequences on social movement repertoires. I suggested that in general a tolerant and soft style of policing favors the diffusion of protest. A repressive and hard protest policing results in a shrinking of mass movements but a radicalization of smaller protest groups. While preventive, selective and legal protest policing isolates the more violent wings of social movements and help the integration of the more moderate ones, reactive, diffuse, and "dirty" techniques alienate the more moderate wings from the state. Protest and police repertoires evolve through processes of reciprocal adaptation and innovation.

Endnotes

[1]. In his pivotal study on political opportunities in American cities, Eisinger (1973) focused on access to the political system. Subsequent empirical studies considered additional variables, such as electoral instability (Piven and Cloward 1977), the availability of allies, and the tolerance for protest among the elite (Jenkins and Perrow 1977), the influence of the political process (Tilly 1978, McAdam 1982). Tarrow (1983) integrated these empirical observations in the theoretical framework for his study of protest cycles in Italy. In Tarrow's framework, the components of the POS are the degree of access to political institutions, the degree of stability/instability of political alignments, the availability and strategic posture of potential allies (Tarrow 1983:28), and--in a later work (Tarrow 1989:35)--the political conflicts among and within elites.

[2]. I refer to "behavior" as including both strategically oriented actions and unplanned events (della Porta and Rucht 1992:502).

[3] I have collected so far information on six protest campaigns: three in Berlin and three in Rome. Those that took place in Berlin were: the protest campaign of the student movement in the spring of 1967; the wave of protest surrounding the visit of President Ronald Reagan in spring 1982; and the protest sparked by a second visit by Reagan, in 1987. The protest events in Rome that I looked were: the first escalation during the student movement in 1968; the so-called "77 movement" in the spring of 1977; and Reagan's visit of 1982. For the German case basic information can be found in Cilip 1981; Sack and Steiner 1984; Busch et al 1988; Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen 1988; and Katzenstein 1990; for the Italian case, in Canosa 1976, and della Porta 1990. For a comparison of the two countries, see della Porta and

Rucht 1992; della Porta 1992a, 1994. A different version of this article is a chapter in my book on political violence, social movement and the state in the two countries (della Porta 1995).

[4] I should had that the lack of reliable statistical data on the possible indicators of protest policing styles frustrated any attempt at controlling with quantitative measures the qualitative information coming from the case studies.

[5] My information on this period are taken from Canosa 1976:chaps. 1 and 2.

[6] As many as 62 demonstrators died betweeen 1948 and 1950, 33 between 1951 and 1962 (Canosa 1976:chaps 2 and 3, esp. 127-8; 134-5, 210-13, 217-24).

[7] The fascist *Testo Unico di Pubblica Sicurezza* had given in fact the police the right to "admonish" and send individuals to "confinement" (that is restriction in a little village away from home), to enforce "compulsory repatriation" to an individual's own town of residence, to deny individuals a passport and the freedom to emigrate, to prohibit public meetings (for reasons of security), and to censor printed materials. According to article 2, the prefect--the direct deputy of the interior minister at the local level--had the authority to take all measures necessary to preserve law and order, whenever there was the threat of a generically defined "danger". A partial reform was implemented only at the end of 1956, after several interventions of the Constitutional Court -- that is, the Italian Supreme Court. The new law abolished the "admonishment" and the *fermo di polizia*, but the police retained the power to assign the individuals they considered "dangerous" to territorial internment and "special surveillance" (law no. 1423/56).

[8] In 1950 the defence minister issued similar regulations for the use of the armed forces to maintain public order (*Vie Nuove* 1969).

[9] In this period had started, indeed, the legislative process that brought, in the early seventies, to laws that fixed a maximum period for incarceration before the judgement (Law no. 406/70) and increased the number of conditions under which a judge could parole a defendant even for those crimes for which arrest was compulsory (Law no. 773/72) (see Grevi 1984).

[10] In 1964, the head of the military intelligence (Sifar) *generale* De Lorenzo, was accused of planning a coup d'Etat and had to resign. Under De Lorenzo, the security services collected files on the public and private life of politicians from all the main parties (De Lutiis 1984). Subversive forced continued to have an influence on the intelligence services also later on.

[11] In particular, new regulations against criminality increased the maximum preventive detention (Law 99/74), and gave the police the right to interrogate a defendant (Law 220/74), to search without a formal warrant of suspicion, and to hold a suspect for 48 hours (Law 152/75).

[12] Between 1969 and 1974, bombs set by right-wing terrorists killed 17 people on December 12th 1969, in Milan; six in July 1970 on a train in Calabria; eights during a union meeting in Brescia, in 1974; and 12 on the train Italicus, near Bologna, in 1974. On these occasions, the repression of right-wing terrorism was so ineffective that the principals and the executors of those crimes are still unknown. On right-wing radicalism in these years, see Ferraresi 1984:57-72.

[13] The participation of several leaders of the secret services in the covert "Lodge Propaganda 2" (a masonic lodge, with subversive aims), and a series of obscure episodes during the Red Brigades' kidnapping of the president of the DC, Aldo Moro (listed in Flamigni 1988) indicate, however, that the "strategy of tension" had not lost all supporters.

[14] For instance, the quest for a reform that would make the police more professional and help to defeat terrorism remained unfulfilled.

[15] Police practices were not the only factor contributing to the "leaden" climate of these years: the laws changed, and in a illiberal direction (Corso 1979; Grevi 1984). The "emergency laws" authorized the arrest of anyone who violated the prohibition against disguising oneself (Law 533/77); abolished the maximum limit for preventive detention when a trial was suspended because it was impossible to form a jury or to exercise defence rights (Law 296/77); modified the rules for the formation of popular juries (Law 74/78); introduced a special prison system (Laws 1/77 and 450/77); increased sentences for terrorist crimes; and limited individual guarantees for citizens and defendants (Laws 191/78 and 15/80). In particular, the anti-terrorist law 15/80 introduced the "preventive arrest", which allowed the police to detain a person in custody when there was a suspicion that this person would commit a crime.

[16] The climate of the "emergency" influenced even the judicial process itself. Several trials carried out in those years were *processi indiziari*--that is, trials based on circumstantial evidence in which the judges considered even the testimony of only one person or one's affiliation with an organization with a radical ideology as sufficient evidence of guilt. Moreover, the courts often accepted the principle of collective responsibility. This praxis, which lawyers justified by claiming that it was difficult to find proofs, was also extended to the more radical movement organizations. After the emergency period, legal scholars expressed their concern for the often disproportionate increase in the lenght of sentences, a result of the vague definitions given to some crimes (for instance, subversive association; armed band; or armed insurrection against the power of the state) (see, for example, De Ruggiero 1982; Onorato 1982).

[17] The "conciliatory" temper of this period is evident in the anti-terrorist legislation of these years. After the "emergency" declined, new laws were passed (particularly in 1982 and in 1986) that

were designated to take advantage of the internal crisis in the terrorist organizations. Most notably, they introduced "compensations" for the members of underground organizations who collaborated with the investigations or had simply declared they had given up the "armed struggle". In addition, the implementation of prison reform created the preconditions for a reintegration of former terrorists into society.

[18] In 1981, the parliament agreeds on the long-discussed reform for the demilitarization and professionalization of the police forces that met some of the demands for a more professional and less militarized police espressed by a movement for democratization that had became stronger and stronger within the police itself.

[19] One peace activist, for example, complained that the judge had acquitted him for "not having committed the crime", notwithstanding his "full confession" (L'Abate 1990).

[20] On protest policing in this period I referred to Busch et al 1988:318-328.

[21] Between 1951 and 1961, about 500,000 German citizens were involved in 200,000 proceedings for politically motivated crimes (Bikini 1981:66).

[22] For a short history of *Demonstrationsrecht* in Germany after the Second World War, see Blanke and Sterzel 1983.

[23] By 1976, half a million of people had been investigated, and 430 excluded from the civil service because of anti-constitutional activities or participation in an anti-constitutional organization.

[24] For a nationally called march in Kalkar, the police searched 122,000 people and 68,000 cars in Northrhein-Westfalen (147,000 people, 75,000 cars, and a train in the Federal Republic) (Cilip 1978:24 ff).

[25] In Germany as in Italy, anti-terrorist laws limited the opportunities for protest. In 1974 an amendment to the criminal proceedings law reduced the rights of the defendant; and in 1976 new legislation introduced the crimes of "founding a terrorist organization" (par. 129a), calling for "anti-constitutional" violence (par. 88a), and distributing of publications that encourage illegal actions (par. 130). In 1977 a law was passed prohibiting any contacts with terrorists in prison; in 1978, new laws gave the police greater power in conducting searches.

[26] On protest policing and escalation in Wackersdorf, see Kretschmer 1988; on the early escalation in the campaign against the expansion of the Frankfurt airport, see Schubart 1983; and on the campaign against the conference of the IWF, see Gerhard (1993). As mentioned, in my case studies, I collected information on the two visits of Ronald Reagan to Berlin, one in 1982 and one in 1987.

[27] See, for instance, state reactions to the boycott of the national census at the beginning of the eighties (Appel and Hummel 1988).

[28] Scharpf (1984:57) defined this concept as "an overall understanding, among those who exercise effective power, of a set of precise premises integrating world-views, goals and means".

[29] More specifically, Kriesi distinguished between integrative (facilitative, cooperative, assimilative) and exclusive (repressive, confrontational, polarizing) national strategies.

[30] An incomplete list of the relevant variables would include: (1) *legislation on civil rights*--in particular on citizens' rights (rights of movement, rights of expression); defendants' rights (preventive imprisonment, presence of one's attorney at interrogations, right of the police to interrogate a defendant); prisoners' rights (privacy, contacts with the external world); and (2) the *organization of the repressive apparatuses*, including primarily the police, the secret service, and

the judiciary. Relevant questions about the police refer to the degree to which they are militarized (how dependent are they on the military 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?); to their accountability (are there special bodies for the control of protest? special courts for police crimes? do the police have the right to "shoot for killing"?); and to centralization (how much power do decentralized units have? how powerful is the central government?). The specialization of the secret services in internal versus external security and their relative dependence on the military are also relevant factors in any attempt to define the context for protest and protest policing. Characteristics relevant to the judiciary concern who has the right to initiate a trial for political crimes; the existence of special courts for political crimes; the existence of an inquisitorial legal process versus an adversarial legal process, and the body of laws on political crimes.

[31] Monjardet (1990, 214-5) suggested, for instance, that--remembering the negative political consequences of the police killing demonstrators on February 1934--the French police is still trained to consider the demonstrator not as an enemy but as a temporary adversary, and to avoid to injured or killing people.

[32] For instance, according to Zwerman (1987) the "harder" counter-terrorist policies of the Reagan's administration resulted from the pressure of right-wing groups (such as the Moral Majority) on the national government.

[33] On escalation and unforeseen consequences of police intervention, see Monnet (1990).

[34] The complex relations between repression and social movement activities can probably be explained if we take into account the fact that protest policing influences both costs and

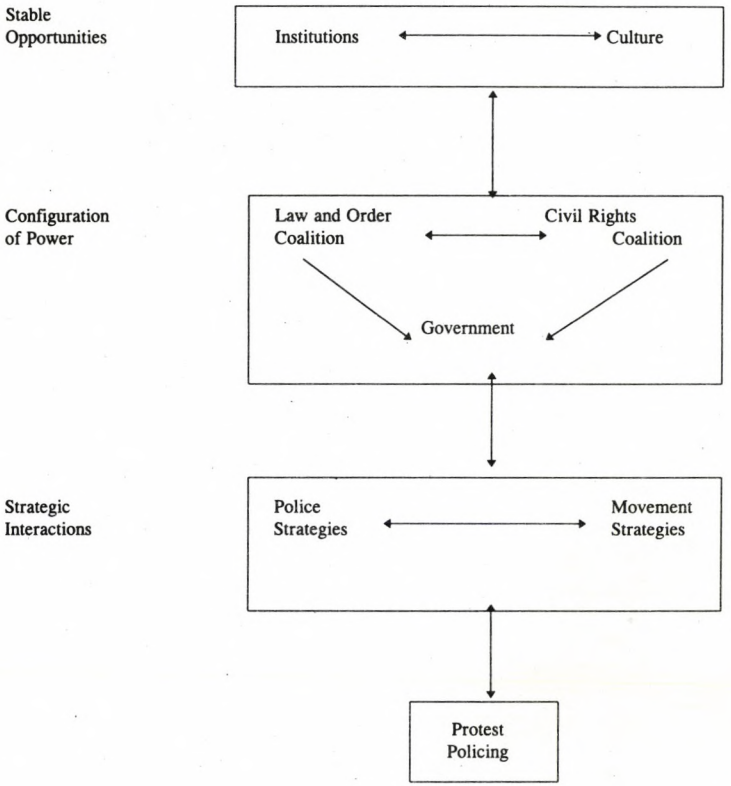
(expected) benefits of collective action. First, state repression represents one of the most relevant (potential) costs of taking part in collective behaviour (Tilly 1978:100). Even if other costs and benefits are taken into account--and even if collective behaviour is not always "rational"--the weight of the cost defined by state repression would be difficult to overstate. But the form of repression influences the same grievances that spark protest in the first place, for examples, by creating "injustice frames" (Gamson, Fireman, and Rytina 1982). The more "repressive" the state, therefore, the higher the potential rewards of collective action, since the "punishment" of the unfair state would became part of the expected rewards, and the need to "do something" would appear all the more urgent to some activists.

[35] About 1,300 police were present at the first demonstration in Brokdorf, 6,500 at the second demonstration in Brokdorf; there were 5,000 police at the demonstration in Grohnde; and 8,000 at the demonstration in Kalkar.

Figure 1: Protest Policing in Italy and Germany - 1950-1990

Italy		Germany	
phase	characteristics	characteristics	phase
the "repressive" fifties	repressive diffuse reactive hard legal	repressive selective reactive (relatively) hard legal	Adenauer's Era
the center-left governments	(more) tolerant diffuse reactive soft(er) (mainly) legal	(relatively) repressive selective reactive (relatively) hard legal	the student movement
the strategy of tension	repressive diffuse reactive hard "dirty"	tolerant selective preventive soft legal	the Brandt's government
the emergency years	repressive (more) selective reactive hard (mainly) legal	(more) repressive selective preventive soft (with some escalations) legal	the Schmidt's government
the Eighties	(very) tolerant selective (more) preventive soft legal	(very) tolerant selective preventive soft legal	the Eighties

Figure 2: A Model for the Analysis of Protest Policing



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