

Crowd Control Dynamics

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Analysis of an array of military and law enforcement crowd control manuals presently in use reveals partial reliance upon the remnants of outdated crowd theory. For example, elements of the “Transformation Hypothesis” advanced by LeBon, Park and Blumer and “Predisposition Theory” as suggested by Allport and extended by Miller and Dollard to include their Deprivation-Frustration- Aggression formulation appear in descriptions of crowd behavior presented within the U.S. Army’s FM 19-15 which addresses crowd control. Now dismissed as “tautological” and as lacking empiric rigor, contemporary scholars, employing systematic observational techniques and statistical analysis, have made contributions to the study of collective behavior once dominated by these “armchair” theorists. Among these, staff at the University of New Hampshire, have been building systematic case studies from which to abstract uniform data elements to enable identification of patterns of crowd behavior and correlation of event characteristics, crowd and control force behaviors, and crowd and control force interaction with event outcome. The data base is especially designed to capture information concerning the availability and use of less lethal / non-lethal technology and includes uniformly categorized data concerning the following:

1. the event such as location, duration, weather, temperature, time of day, day of week, planned vs. spontaneous, etc.,

2. the crowd including observed demographic composition, purpose, announced intent (if any), prevalence of substance use, rhetoric, weapons, etc.
3. the control force including in addition to those data under crowd above, type of uniform, level of training, availability and use of less lethal / non-lethal technology, etc.
4. the role and activities of the media and
5. the step by step interaction between crowd and control force.

To date, information concerning sports celebratory riots, anti-invasion demonstrations, and protests concerning globalization and exploitation have been compiled and will be presented with substantial emphasis on lessons learned.

Key words:

Crowd control

Collective Behavior

Riot

Protest

Demonstration