

# Democratic Policing as a Contested Drama

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# Think of Policing as Drama: an Exercise in Theatre, Presentation and Role Playing

- Policing has a material violent and ecological place
- People know policing primarily indirectly

# Historically Policing is not one Drama but Many Dramas

- The idea that the Peel model has dominated policing studies is incorrect
- There are many models

# Some of these Dramas become BIG THEATRE

- Events that are little theatre become amplified by politics and the media
- Police organizations organize in damage control to reduce possibilities of big theatre

# Big Theatre Dramas are Complemented by Periodic Social Movements

- Community policing
- Broken Windows
- Hot Spots policing
- Compstat

# Foregrounded Matters of Policing – Can be Studied by Interrogating Background Features of Policing

- They shape current cultures
- They cast the mandate in a particular framework
- They constrain thought about the future
- They are the hinges upon which Research swings (or not)
- They always lurk in the background
- And can emerge as new counterpoint to current practices

# The Range of Ideas that Remain Contested in Policing Studies is Broad

- We should excavate and set forth dramatic images from the past
- To see how they shape the future

# Consider Several Images Drawn from the Past

- The imagery of Peel – Unarmed visible reactive preventive policing
- The Gendarmerie – constabulary image
  - Armed
  - Drilled
  - Responsive to major challenges to order
  - High policing as a warrant
- Remnants of Colonial policing and its local variations
- Private Corporate modes of policing
- Regulatory policing of a non-criminal sort

# Summary Remarks

- All are considered public visible legitimate forms of policing in Democratic Societies
- But, they always compete with local self-help revenge based ideas that do not involve the State

# This is the Field for the Study of Contested Dramas

- Imagery and facts are interlaced
- There is no linear developing narrative based on a single image
- It is prudent to see these images as reflected and refracted in any given police organization

# The Value of this Conference

- Reflect on the History of Policing
- Consider the Dramas
- Recognize Conflict and Competition
- Awareness of the power of Colonial Policing