Policing Crowds: Case Studies from Las Vegas, Nevada

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Crowd Management
Effective Crowd Management

- RDFC Interaction Model
- 4D Tactic
- Policy
- Training
- Situational Prevention
- Event Planning
# Dynamics of Crowd Psychology

## Reactance Theory
- The “you must/you won’t” approach promotes resistance

## Elaborated Social Identity Model
- Aggressive tactics encourage aggressive crowd behavior

## Coercion Theory
- Predictability reduces tension and encourages compliance
Breakdown of Trust

- Police incite more harm rather than less
- Police use force against entire crowd based on actions of few
- Police use unnecessary force and aggression
- Police act in unpredictable or seemingly biased ways
RDFC Interaction Model

Reasonable
Restrict fewest freedoms possible – intervene only to prevent harm

Disarming
Limit use of force, coercion, and intrusiveness

Focused
Target only harmful behaviors and conditions

Consistent
Deploy dependable and unbiased tactics

Actions/reactions that build trust and support
## RDFC Interaction Model

Police actions that build public support and trust

| DIMENSION      | POLICE RESPONSE (FROM PUBLIC’S PERCEPTION)...
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------
| **Reasonable** | protects individuals’ rights and necessary to prevent harm. |
| **Disarming**  | does not use avoidable force, coercion, or intrusiveness. |
| **Focused**    | targets only behaviors and conditions causing harm. |
| **Consistent** | is dependable, unbiased, and generates positive interactions. |
RDFC Interaction Model

- Protect Freedoms: Reasonable
- De-escalate Situations: Disarming
- Ensure Safety: Focused
- Establish Confidence: Consistent

What are our primary goals when policing crowds?
## Crowd Behavior/Response Typology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response style</th>
<th>Civilian</th>
<th>Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supressor</td>
<td>Reports a suspicious backpack in restroom</td>
<td>Offers assistance to visibly agitated fan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reactor</td>
<td>Stops drunk friend from climbing over railing</td>
<td>Responds quickly to reported fighting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enabler</td>
<td>Cheers on fans throwing objects onto field</td>
<td>Fails to properly search entering persons/bags</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoter</td>
<td>Attempts to bring weapons into venue</td>
<td>Responds aggressively to minor infractions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4D Tactic

Disarm

Defuse

Detect

Deter

4Ds
Disarm
Engage Early & Often

• Every interaction is an opportunity to create a “force multiplier”

With the crowds on your side, it is easier to play up to your potential.

– Julius Erving (Dr. J)
Defuse
Positive Communication

Don’t say this...
• “It’s the law.
• “You can’t stand here.”
• “If you don’t do as I say, then I will arrest you.”

Instead say this...
• “So that we can keep people safe.”
• “Do you folks need directions?”
• “I need your help so that you don’t miss any of the event.”
Detect
Crowd Violence “Triggers”

**Venue Characteristics**
- Performance proximity
- Seating arrangements
- Stadium location
- Place reputation
- Temperature
- Noise level

**Event Characteristics**
- Crowd demographics
- Performance quality
- Performer behavior
- Alcohol regulation
- Event significance
- Event duration
- Crowding

**Contributing Factors**

**Staff Characteristics**
- Training
- Experience
- Presence
- Communication

UNLV
Deter

Vigilance and Quick Response
5 opportunity dimensions that influence offender (human) decision-making

Choice

- Reward
- Provocations
- Risk
- Effort
- Excuses
Crowds Create Dangerous Conditions

**Provoke**
- Jump/breach barriers
  - Start a fire
  - Buy more/get alcohol
- Sense of anonymity
  - Escape into masses
  - “Gang-up” on others

**Easier**
- Many potential targets
  - Provides excitement
  - Reaction of others

**Less Risky**
- “I didn’t know”
- “I was drunk”
- “Everyone else did it”

**Rewarding**
- Jump/breach barriers
- Sense of anonymity
- Many potential targets
- “I didn’t know”
- “I was drunk”
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**Excusable**
- Jump/breach barriers
- Sense of anonymity
- Many potential targets
- “I didn’t know”
- “I was drunk”
- “Everyone else did it”

**Swarming**
- Crushing
- Rushing
- Pushing
- Shoving
- Falling
- Waiting
25 Techniques – Situational Crime Prevention

- Increase Effort
  - Harden Targets
  - Control Access
  - Screen Exits
  - Deflect Offenders
  - Control Tools

- Increase Risks
  - Extend Guardianship
  - Natural Surveillance
  - Reduce Anonymity
  - Place Managers
  - Formal Surveillance

- Reduce Rewards
  - Conceal Targets
  - Remove Targets
  - Identify Property
  - Disrupt Markets
  - Deny Benefits

- Reduce Provocations
  - Reduce Frustrations
  - Avoid Disputes
  - Reduce Emotional Arousal
  - Neutralize Peer Pressure
  - Discourage Imitation

- Remove Excuses
  - Set Rules
  - Post Instructions
  - Alert Conscience
  - Assist Compliance
  - Control Drugs & Alcohol

Techniques – Situational Crime Prevention
New Year’s Eve on the Strip

- Four-mile long casino-resort corridor on Las Vegas Boulevard
- Approximately 400,000 people attend the annual event
- Second largest New Year’s celebration in the United States
## NYE Situational Tactics

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<td>Live-feed video surveillance; use of correctional staff / horse patrol</td>
<td>Increase Risks</td>
<td>Strengthen Formal Surveillance</td>
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<td>Participants causing harm are quickly removed from the crowd so the party can continue</td>
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<td>Officers dressed in “soft” uniforms rather than militarized / riot gear</td>
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<td>Portable toilets / trash bins / plastic cups made readily available</td>
<td>Remove Excuses</td>
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Barricade Strategy

6:00PM
Las Vegas Blvd closed to vehicle traffic – barricades keep pedestrians on sidewalks

7:00PM
Officers move barricades toward the boulevard center as crowd size increases

8:00PM
Pedestrians restricted only from center lanes as the midnight fireworks display approaches

Geographic Features

- Casino
- Las Vegas Blvd
- Barricade
- Crowd
- Police officers
Increase Effort  
Remove Excuses  
Harden Targets  
Alert Conscience

Increase Risks  
Reduce Provocations  
Natural Surveillance  
Reduce Frustrations

Reduce Rewards  
Remove Targets
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New Directions for LVMPD

• Updated academy curriculum
• Foot patrol in tourist corridor
• UNLV-LVMPD Partnerships
Additional Resources
Center for Problem-Oriented Policing
Download free @ www.popcenter.org
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