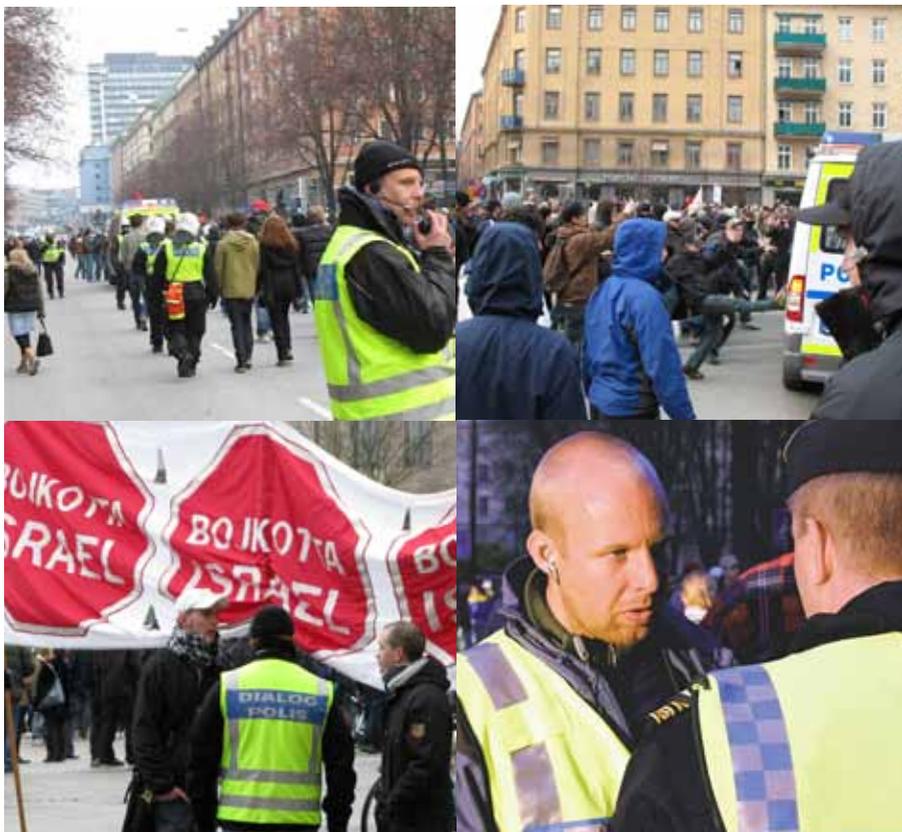




# Dialogue Police

Experiences, observations and opportunities

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Author: Stefan Holgersson

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# Preface

**DIALOGUE POLICE WORK IS** part of the Swedish National Special Police Tactics. During the last five years the Swedish Police have developed methods and approaches to policing situations which are or might become dangerous in everyday police work and at major events through implementing National Police Tactics which build on *dialogue*, *de-escalation* and *non-confrontation*. To handle high risk crowd events Special Police Tactics (SPT) are applied and a national reinforcement organisation consisting of police from the three largest police counties, is used all over the country when needed. The organisation consists of nationally trained commanders, uniformed police officers in mobile units, dialogue police officers, and plainclothes arrest officers and transport units.

Through research in different European countries both at high risk demonstrations and football matches earlier perceptions of crowds as always being dangerous has been replaced by modern crowd psychology which focuses on processes within groups and between groups. Through this knowledge special tactics police now consists of an integrated strategic approach based on principles which can prevent and de-escalate conflicts and confrontations: knowledge, facilitation, communication as well as differentiation. By applying these principles self-policing (crowds keeping the order by themselves) can be promoted. These research based conflict reducing principles challenge the police to learn and understand more about the cultural norms of the crowds and their legitimate intentions, to facilitate peaceful protests, to communicate the intentions of the police and when crimes are committed to make interventions discriminately.

One crucial factor in the development of Special Police Tactics is the dialogue police function. In this report, the author Stefan Holgersson highlights experiences, observations and possibilities which have emerged mainly during 2002-2007 of the dialogue police function within Stockholm Police Authority. The report is unique as it describes from within the police organization the developments of the dialogue function as the author is a police officer and a researcher. Examples of dialogue work are described to illustrate how the dialogue police functions as a link between the police command and organizers of demonstrations and manifestations before, during and after an event. The work is a long term one, building long term trust and making the police actions transparent and coherent. The dialogue police has an important role in informing demonstrators on how police operations focus on both contributing to peaceful protests and security and on setting limits to what is acceptable in order to avoid personal injuries and riots at major events. In the report Special Police Tactics and dialogue work is related to research and theories within crowd management.

Today dialogue police work is an integrated part of National Special Police Tactics and of the national reinforcement organization. During 2008-2009 training and development work has overcome some of the problems identified in this report. In a project run by the Swedish National Police Board a researchbased evaluation of the application of Special Police Tactics has been conducted.

The Board will this year start a three year EU-project “Good practice for dialogue and communication as strategic principles for policing political manifestations in Europe” for further development and exchange of police practice and research.

We would like to share the conclusions in this report of the dialogue police development with colleagues who might be interested in developing a dialogue police function. Policing protests is an important part of strengthening our democracies as it relates both to the basic human rights of freedom of assembly and of expression and to security in society.

Stockholm in April 2010

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bengt Svenson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bengt Svenson  
National Police Commissioner



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# Summary

**THIS REPORT DESCRIBES** the development of the dialogue police function at the Stockholm Police Authority. It is a result of a study from within the organisation, by a dialogue police who at the same time is a researcher. It was first written in Swedish in 2007 and has now been adapted for an international audience. As the dialogue police function is relative new and not much is written about it the purpose of the report is to describe the dialogue police work, its challenges and possibilities to enable discussions, learning and further developments.

The report is based on field interviews and observations. Different examples illustrate situations that are common in dialogue police work, dilemmas to handle and problems that occurred during the development of the function.

The origin of the dialogue function is identified. The dialogue police function has gradually become more established in organisational terms within the Swedish Police. It is part of the National Police Tactics which was established by the Swedish National Police Board in 2004. Today there are designated dialogue police officers in the police authorities of Stockholm, Västra Götaland and Skåne. They are part of national reinforcement organisation to be used in police operations at high risk special events all over the country.

Dialogue police officers are mainly used at demonstrations and other public manifestations (expressions) of opinion. The dialogue police function constitutes a link between organisers/ demonstrators and the police command.

At first, the dialogue police unit in Stockholm consisted of some nominated police officers serving in the police negotiators' unit

at the Stockholm police authority. The dialogue police unit now consists of police officers who are specially trained at a national level for the work.

Dialogue police work takes place in police operations before, during and after a public event when there is a risk of confrontations or large scale public disturbances. The report describes the tasks during the different phases of a police operation. Situations that are common for the dialogue officer to face, challenging situations and dilemmas are described, which needs to be discussed - all for a learning purpose.

The principles of dialogue are related to current and relevant research into crowd psychology.

Dialogue work needs to be characterised by mutual respect in order to safeguard the rights protected by the constitution. More recently, dialogue police officers are also used in incidents with ethnic and religious overtones to attempt to de-escalate conflicts and prevent confrontations.

The needs for further developments of the dialogue concept are identified. It also discusses questions which touch upon fundamental democratic principles.

# 1. Introduction

I **WOULD LIKE** to thank the following people:

Dialogue police officers and former dialogue police officers in the Stockholm Police Authority's dialogue group who have shared their experiences and given their views on the content of this report, with a special thanks to Roger Ekenstedt.

Lars Dolmén Ph.D, the Swedish National Police Academy, Solna and in particular Johannes Knutsson, professor, Norwegian Police University College, Oslo, who made valuable comments on the content of the report.

Maria Perenyi at the library of the Swedish National Police Academy in Solna, who was successful in obtaining all reference literature required for this report.

Dedicated instructors and others involved in the SPT concept, without whose efforts, the dialogue police work would not have developed.

## 1.1 Aim and target groups

**THE MAIN AIM** of the report is to describe the experiences, observations and opportunities which have emerged during the seven years the dialogue police unit has existed at the Stockholm Police Authority. The report also discusses questions which touch upon fundamental democratic principles and the dilemmas which can arise in connection with dialogue police work. Those issues are mainly dealt with in the later sections of the report.

There is also a need to develop a theoretical framework for dialogue police work that can serve as a basis for further developments.

The report was originally written in Swedish and has now been adapted for a European audience as there has been much interest from abroad in the Swedish dialogue concept.

It is aimed at European colleagues, police officers, commanders, researchers, trainers and others who wish to obtain an insight into the work of the dialogue police. Another target group is people with an interest in further advancement of the dialogue police concept. This report is also intended to be used for training and to complement previous research.

## 1.2 Background

**SWEDEN HAS A NATIONAL POLICE SERVICE**, responsible to the Ministry of Justice. The police are organized in 21 independent police forces. The National Police Board has an administrative and supervisory function for the police service and is headed by a National Police Commissioner who is appointed by the government. Among other things; the National Police Board is responsible for the development of new methods and technological support. According to its instruction it has a coordinating function for large events, when the resources of one police force will not suffice.

The largest police force is the police authority of Stockholm, with a population of just under 2 million. The Stockholm police have approximately 5,000 serving police officers and 1,500 civilian employees. Sweden has a total of approximately 18,000 police officers and aims to increase that number to 20,000 by 2010. The population of Sweden is just over 9 million. Sweden has been classified as the most democratic country in the world according to the Democracy Index<sup>1</sup>.

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1. The Economist. <http://a330.g.akamai.net/7/330/25828/20081021185552/graphics.eiu.com/PDF/Democracy%20Index%202008.pdf>.

The EU summit in Gothenburg 2001 developed into something of a national trauma. A large number of police officers and demonstrators were injured and extensive damage was caused. Police opened fire on demonstrators. The government ordered a special committee, known as the Gothenburg Committee, to investigate these extremely serious events. The Committee's report brought to light serious deficiencies in crowd management training for the police as well as deficiencies in terms of know-how. It also established that police officers from different police authorities applied different tactical models.

The importance of using dialogue in demonstrations and other public manifestations<sup>2</sup> was stressed:

*“We are convinced of the importance of dialogue between the police and political organisations and other opinion groups... In our view, the police must develop dialogue as a working method. Nevertheless, because each occasion is unique, with different protagonists, we do not believe that it is possible to use the same dialogue model or method on every occasion. Nevertheless, there are certain fundamental principles that should be observed.” (SOU [Statens offentliga utredningar – Swedish Government Official Reports] 2002:122)*

The Gothenburg Committee's conclusions, in combination with the police organisation's own assessments of serious public order disturbances, led to a proposal for development of national police tactics. In 2004 the Swedish National Police Board decided to implement National Police Tactics for situations that are or can develop into dangerous situations.

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<sup>2</sup> In the report the words demonstration, political manifestation will be used interchangeably.

## 1.3 Tactical approach

**SWEDISH NATIONAL POLICE TACTICS** consists of unified police tactics methods that build on dialogue, de-escalation and non-confrontation. For crowd management in special events with high risk of confrontations or public order disturbances Special Police Tactics (SPT) was developed. It consists of the mobile operational concept and a situational conflict management approach. It has its base in national basic tactics and a Danish<sup>3</sup> concept which was adapted to Swedish circumstances.

A national SPT-organisation was formed, which is available for deployment anywhere in the country when needed and by decision of the National Criminal Police. The organisation consists of command structure<sup>4</sup>, uniformed mobile units, dialogue police and plain clothes officers who carry out searches, documentation checks and arrests.

The three largest county police authorities in Sweden, Stockholm, Västra Götaland and Skåne, are responsible for staffing the national reinforcement organisation. For the other 18 police authorities a national tactics concept (Basic Tactics 2) has also been developed for crowd management. These tactics have the same theoretical and methodological base as SPT and national training is carried out locally through nationally trained tutors.

The dialogue police officers, like other police officers involved in the SPT concept, are seconded and have other police duties when they are not serving in the SPT organisation. The experiences and observations in this report were obtained from the Stockholm police dialogue unit.

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<sup>3</sup> The mobile operational concept, which in turn was based on a concept from Holland.

<sup>4</sup> Strategic commander (gold), tactical commander (silver), operational/commanders (bronze) and group commanders.

There are 13 dialogue police officers (with a further two currently being recruited) in Stockholm and up to 25% of their working time is devoted to dialogue police matters. The rest of their working hours are spent in different units. There is considerable variation in their age, back-ground and main duties. Dialogue police officers are selected to complement each other and to ensure that the group as a whole is as effective as possible. Their work is not merely confined to operations in connection with special events. A continuous commitment is required to enable them to function as dialogue police. Dialogue police officers receive payment for answering their mobile phones and cultivating contacts outside normal working hours. There is a full-time coordinator who is continuously engaged in dialogue police matters and who is responsible for the dialogue police officers in Stockholm.

The dialogue police are used at large demonstrations and manifestations when their deployment is considered most appropriate. For events known in advance, the dialogue police are used at the planning stage. At unplanned, unauthorised demonstrations, the dialogue police attempt to establish contact on the spot. The main aim of the dialogue police is to be a link between organisers/demonstrators and the police command. Their work should be characterised by mutual respect in order to safeguard the human rights protected by the constitution (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005).

Training material for the mobile operational concept emphasises that it is important at large-scale events to begin dialogue work well in advance in order to establish cooperation as early as possible between the dialogue police and information units. The material also states that the authorities should endeavour to maintain a continuous dialogue with the different moulders of opinion to achieve long-term mutual trust. It emphasises the importance of carrying out a debriefing with organisers/participants after each operation (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005).

In 2002, based on the contents of the Gothenburg Committee's report, senior police officers in Stockholm decided to appoint police officers who could enter into dialogue at demonstrations. They approached the police negotiators unit in which I was serving. A number of negotiators were appointed to serve as dialogue police during demonstrations, in addition to their negotiating duties. There was no dialogue police training as it was a completely new concept. There was also uncertainty as to what a dialogue police officer was supposed to do. I was involved in the formation of the dialogue police unit in Stockholm and I worked in this area up to the beginning of 2009. I also served as dialogue police co-ordinator for a period of time. Even though I am no longer a member of the dialogue unit, I am constantly involved in discussions concerning dialogue matters.

This report is the result of a study on an organisation from within. The position as an insider enables me to gain access to interesting empirical evidence but at the same time it also gives rise to problems associated with my role as a researcher. The doctoral thesis I presented in 2005 contains a more extensive discussion of my role as a researching police officer. For a description of the methodological dilemmas associated with that role and the standpoints that are important to adopt, I refer to my thesis (Holgersson, 2005). Nevertheless, I also wish to discuss some methodological factors in this report.

This report could not have been written without my experience as a dialogue police officer and my good relationship with the dialogue police officers in the dialogue unit in Stockholm. I would also like to emphasise that this involvement makes it impossible for me to have an objective attitude towards the work of the dialogue unit, even though I have attempted to remain objective. For this reason, the examples in this report must be regarded merely as a way of illustrating ways of working of the dialogue group and not as an attempt to verify or establish particular proceedings. I have attempted as far as possible to anonymise the examples given in the report.

The report is based on field interviews and observations. It is specified whether the described examples are the result of my own observations or whether they are based on information from the dialogue police officers involved. A range of assessments and other documents have also been studied. The report clearly states when that information is presented.

The examples have been reviewed and approved by the dialogue police officers who provided the information or who were being observed. All dialogue police officers were aware that I am a researcher and constantly carry out research through participative observations.



## 2. Development of the dialogue police function

**THE POLICE'S CONCEPT OF DIALOGUE** prior to and negotiation during the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001 was characterised by a traditional view of “law and order” issues (Oskarsson, 2001). Police forces in Europe and elsewhere have developed methods for a range of negotiation techniques to be used in high risk protest actions (della Porta & Reiter, 1998; Waddington, 1994). Despite access to extensive international experience of how negotiation techniques had been used by foreign police forces, “soft” strategic issues of this type were of little interest to the police authority of Västra Götaland during many fact-finding visits around Europe prior to the EU summit in Gothenburg (Oskarsson, 2001).

The concept of dialogue was introduced at a late stage in the police preparatory work. This reorientation gave the impression of being a response to urgent circumstances rather than a genuine conviction (Oskarsson, 2001). Despite these insufficient preconditions, including not making use of international experiences, the police officers who were assigned the task of attempting to establish dialogue were so successful in their work that its potential was emphasised in the Gothenburg Committee report.

When I and other negotiators were building up the dialogue unit in Stockholm, we cooperated with police officers of Västra Götaland who had experience of dialogue work.

Even though there were some general circumstances common to both cities, it was nevertheless immediately apparent that the conditions for dialogue work were mostly different in Stockholm as compared to Gothenburg. The left wing/autonomous activists in Stockholm consisted more of younger people who formed part

of looser networks than was the case in Gothenburg prior to the EU summit. Also, police methods in Gothenburg had resulted in large-scale mistrust for the police (SOU 2002:122; see also, for example, Granath, 2002; Hågård, 2002 and Hagner, 2002). It was therefore difficult to find someone belonging to left wing/autonomous groups who were interested in carrying on a dialogue with the police. This was the case not only in Stockholm.

It did however prove possible to establish dialogue with groups hostile to foreigners (xenophobic groups). Their organisations were hierarchical. Their leaders were willing to talk to the police and were easy to contact by telephone. Dialogue of this kind had already taken place at the so-called Salem march prior to the introduction of the dialogue police. It was decided that police officers who had already been in contact with these groups would continue to do so. The personnel in the newly formed dialogue unit were divided up. Some assisted the police officer who already had been in contact with the organizers of the Salem march while other negotiators were assigned to dialogue work with left wing/autonomous activists.

The first task carried out by the dialogue police in relation to left wing/autonomous activists took place in the autumn 2002. No further activities took place until 2003 and became more frequent thereafter. This was partly due to extensive damage caused at a so-called “reclaim” festival in 2003 and to international conflicts giving rise to large-scale demonstrations. At first the duties and objectives of the dialogue police were unclear, but were subsequently developed.

Once the dialogue police had been established, it meant that decision-makers had another tool to use in connection with demonstrations. Because the police for a long time had associated certain groups’ activities with the use of violence, attempting to solve or minimise problems through dialogue was an unfamiliar approach. There were also forces within the police against attempting to establish dialogue with the various groups. Some sen-

ior officers viewed dialogue as a sign of weakness and in their opinion it should not be included in the police organisation's duties.

The fact that dialogue activities could be developed at all is due to the courage of some commanders to try out new ideas. The possibility of using dialogue then spread relatively quickly among tactical commanders and also to strategic commanders. A strategic commander has the overall responsibility for an operation (which is ordered to deal with a special situation/ event), while the tactical commander has more tactical responsibility in the field, e.g. for planning and leading actions. Usually there is only one strategic and one tactical commander in operations.

To start with there was little understanding of the dialogue concept among uniformed and plain clothes police officers at lower levels of the organisation. This proved to be a problem for dialogue police activities. However, more understanding of the concept developed. Training in SPT played an important part in increasing this understanding.

In the Danish mobile operational concept (MIK) which the Swedish police had used as main model, there are no specially designated dialogue police officers (Rigspolitiet, 2005). One thing that goes without saying internationally as far as negotiations in crisis situations involving the police is to avoid situations whereby a commander negotiates directly with the counterpart (see, for example, FBI, 1995; McMains & Mullins, 1996). This task should instead be carried out by special officers. Experiences show that senior officers otherwise became bound up in dialogue during protest actions instead of being able to focus on their command and control of units (see, for example, Noakes & Gillham, 2006). One reason for this is that new transnational protests do not normally have any clear hierarchical structure.

There are many similarities between negotiators' work and dialogue police work. It was therefore natural that there should be

designated dialogue police when the MIK concept from Denmark was further developed by the Swedish police.

One fundamental notion is that when the police take on a tough line there is a greater risk of violence and damage. Dialogue, on the other hand, involves communication between two parties and not one party telling the other one what to do. A communicative attitude is at the core of the special police tactics but it also includes an ability on the part of the police organisation to carry out decisive, precise action at the right time against demonstrators who are prone to violence (see Swedish National Police Academy, 2005).

The ability to switch between attempting to establish dialogue and more offensive tactics requires a great deal of skill, particularly for the uniformed police personnel. Uniformed police officers together with commanders have been of decisive importance for the development of the dialogue police. In fact, it would have been impossible to develop dialogue police work independently from the rest of the SPT organisation.

The dialogue police function has gradually become more clearly established in organisational terms in Stockholm and also within the SPT concept as a whole. The original negotiators in the dialogue unit were gradually replaced by special dialogue police. A coordinator was employed. The amount of dialogue work has increased over the past year and half. In 2007, dialogue police officers in Stockholm were deployed on 70 occasions and in 2008 on 100 occasions. Besides events linked to politics, the work now also involves religious and cultural/ethnic related events.

In the development of working methods, experiences and ideas derived from dialogue police work in Västra Götaland, in combination with recognised international police techniques and methods for dealing with crisis situations, played a large part in the beginning. Nevertheless, other knowledge has subsequently increasingly influenced the work of the dialogue unit.

One source of inspiration was dialogue police officers' previous experience of dealing with ethnic conflicts while doing military service abroad. Observations on various events that the dialogue police were involved in were another factor, supported by a range of research findings, particularly relating to crowd behaviour. Some dialogue police officers' university studies in the areas of social science and religious science also served as important stimuli. Another influential factor the development of the concept was requirements and wishes concerning dialogue police activities put forward by senior officers outside the dialogue unit.

Dialogue police officers exist in Malmö, Gothenburg and Stockholm. Their working methods and position in organisational terms differ in the three cities. A desire for formalised duties in the SPT concept has been expressed to enable dialogue police activities to become more uniform throughout the country. Development work at a national level is in progress to address this issue.

It is difficult to establish a single objective measurement to decide how successful activities by the dialogue police unit of the Stockholm police have been. It is necessary to take into account, along with other things, the fact that dialogue police activities are included in a concept (SPT) and the work carried out by the dialogue police officers only forms part of that concept. Neither would it be possible to make a comparison by means of a "natural experiment", i.e. what the situation would have been had no dialogue police activities taken place.

Nevertheless, a range of information has been compiled which indicates that the work of the dialogue police has had a positive effect on the results of the efforts of the police authority of Stockholm to carry out certain tasks:

- A report monitoring dialogue police activities within the Stockholm police SPT organisation contained an very positive view of dialogue activities and the importance of the work of dialogue police officers (Stockholm Police Authority, 2007).

- Persons outside the organisation who have observed dialogue police work have stated that dialogue police activities played a very important part in the successful outcome of various events.

- It has transpired (being both stated and observed) that in several cases it was possible to avert and minimise confrontations through the work of the dialogue police officers.

*- Research indicating the importance of the dialogue police: "The role of dialogue, mainly involving the dialogue police officers, is later emphasised as a peacemaking role. People think that the dialogue police plead the demonstrators' cause to the other police officers." (Hyllander, 2004).*

- Philosophies aiming to reduce the risk of confrontation, on which the work of the dialogue police is based (which include other parts of the SPT concept), gained a great deal of support in research on situational crime prevention (Felson & Clarke, 1995). Clear support for the fundamental principles of the concept may also be found in research on processes taking place in crowds (see, for example, Granström, 2002; Reicher, 1996; Drury & Reicher, 2000; 2005).

- Confrontations between police officers and demonstrators have occurred in Stockholm, but those confrontations have been on a smaller scale in comparison with events in other countries. Hardened activists from other countries have taken part in demonstrations in Stockholm, but any associated damage to property and injuries to persons have been minor. For example, a review of damage reported at the police authority in Stockholm during a period of three years (2003-2005) revealed that only one police officer received injuries during a demonstration that involved being signed off sick for three days or more. Naturally, there are problems with assessing the effects of dialogue police activities on the above results, but reviews after large demonstrations have empha-

sised that the work of the dialogue police is an important factor for success.

- The amount of damage caused during “reclaim” and other such events has fallen. Naturally, it is difficult to assess the effect of the dialogue police on results in this case, but the turning point in the scale of the damage occurred when dialogue was established between the police and the organisers.

- It has been stated in interviews that riots have become reduced in scale and then ceased altogether when the dialogue police became involved.

- Information from the dialogue police has in several cases resulted in the decision to adjust the numbers of personnel in SPT-operations. Sometimes the numbers have been increased and some times reduced.

- Incipient and ongoing conflicts have been smothered through knowledge of people, trust and mediation and the need for SPT operations has disappeared completely in some cases through the work of the dialogue police.

A trend arose in several European countries and in the USA for the police to adopt methods during demonstrations which involved a gentle, tolerant, selective, flexible, professional approach. In several countries, police officers act as mediators to enable demonstrators’ wishes to be met while at the same time satisfying the requirement to keep order (della Porta & Reiter, 1998).

Earlier strategies consisted of the police using robust methods against protesters. These often caused the situation to escalate and meant that the police were forced to adopt even rougher methods (see, for example, Waddington, 1994; della Porta, 1996). There are a number of historical examples from Europe in the last cen-

tury of situations which degenerated due to the rough methods used by the police. These situations resulted in a large number of injured demonstrators and police officers and extensive damage to property (see, for example, Waddington, 1994; Bessel & Emsley, 2000). Situations have occurred, for example, in which the police have opened fire directly at a crowd of protesters and in which citizens succeeded in breaking into and taking over a police station in order to reach and take revenge on a police officer who was considered guilty of an incident (see Bessel & Emsley, 2000). It was only during the 1980s and 1990s that the police began to adopt gentler, more negotiation-orientated strategies (della Porta & Reiter, 1998).

Nevertheless, at the end of the last millennium and the beginning of this, the police in several countries begun to deal with protest actions in a manner which can be classified as neither the previous robust strategies nor negotiation-orientated strategies. The new strategies are a return to massive use of coercive measures, often aimed at temporary incapacitation (Noakes & Gillham, 2006; della Porta & Reiter, 2006b). They involve preventing people from encroaching into certain areas, the overuse of legislation to deprive people of their liberty, among other things, extensive intelligence and use of weapons in the form of tear gas, for example. Negotiation-orientated strategies based on the notion that violence is a last resort were abandoned (Noakes & Gillham, 2006. See also Noakes et al 2005).

Methods used to deal with transnational protests in recent years (della Porta & Tarrow, 2005) have been questioned, even among police services. The current strategy has not been considered successful and a more negotiation-orientated strategy has begun to be adopted in certain contexts (della Porta & Reiter, 2006b).

The Stockholm dialogue unit carried out a fact-finding visit to France in autumn 2008. The purpose of the visit was to investigate why disturbances in Marseille had been minor compared to

many other cities in France. What could be learned from that? The dialogue unit visited a suburb of Paris, one of three main police districts in Paris, and the police authority in the city of Marseille. It emerged that there were certain similarities in their approach to dealing with problems. There were no designated dialogue police officers in Marseille but, as in Stockholm, it was considered extremely important for the police to become involved in dialogue to try to solve problems. However, compared to Sweden, Marseille had completely different instruments to encourage people to enter into dialogue with the police, including the possibility of the police recommending certain persons to the tax authorities for tax relief. This meant that people with a history of problems could obtain advantageous conditions when starting up a company and they thus had no need to maintain themselves by committing offences. The police also worked in extremely close cooperation with district offices and thereby became well established in the local community. According to police officers in Marseille, this structure made the citizens feel that the police and decision-makers were only a short distance away. It was not the same “us” against “them” situation.

Police officers in Marseille stated that there are probably also other reasons why the disturbances in Marseille were so limited in scope. There is only one “football team” in Marseille. Marseille is an important transit port from which drugs are distributed all over France and the drug dealers do not want any disturbances in the market. Also, all city districts have links to the nucleus of the city. Marseille therefore does not have the same type of suburbs as Paris, for example. The Marseille police stated that their way of attempting to achieve dialogue was difficult to disseminate to the rest of France. The Stockholm dialogue unit has also experienced difficulties in disseminating its working methods. Why are police officers’ attempts to establish dialogue met by internal resistance? I will describe a number of possible reasons.

It is not only other police organisations which have had similar experiences to those of the Stockholm dialogue police regarding

the benefits of attempting to establish dialogue. Even in military organisations, the possibility of making use of dialogue has begun to emerge as an advisable approach when attempting to work in conflict zones.

# 3. Dialogue police work

**THE STOCKHOLM DIALOGUE POLICE** have been used in different contexts, e.g.:

- During marches by groups hostile to foreigners (the Salem march, November 30, National Day, May 1, celebrations, etc.).
- During festivals where there was a risk of disturbances or conflict between groups (Pride, Young-08).
- During protests and demonstrations in other counties (Östergötland, Uppsala, Skåne and Jämtland).
- Activities linked to the election, where there was a serious threat of disturbances or a risk of conflicts between groups (e.g. occupations of party information booths, Almedalsveckan [Politicians' Week] and open-air rallies of various kinds).
- Manifestations in support of situations in other countries where there was a risk of disturbances or conflicts between groups (support for the protests in Copenhagen against the demolition of a house, support for the protests against the G8 summit, etc.).
- Protests against acts by other States (the USA's methods in Iraq, Israel's acts in Gaza and the war in Lebanon, Denmark's acts in connection with the publication of the Mohammed cartoons and other occurrences) .
- Risk of conflict connected with ethnic issues during football matches (the derby in Södertälje between Syrian and Assyrian football associations).

- Animal rights protests (relating to research premises which keep laboratory animals).
- Riots in suburbs.
- Protests against certain employers/companies (which have refused to sign collective agreements, for example).

The common denominator for the work carried out by the dialogue police is that it involved different forms of manifestation and other situations where there was a risk of confrontation between groups holding different political views. However, in more recent times, the dialogue police have begun to be requested in situations when there is a risk of confrontation due to ethnic or religious matters.

In the Stockholm police dialogue unit, some police officers deal mainly with organisations with a hierarchical structure whereas other police officers' main area of responsibility is contact with organisations whose structures are shallower and less clearly delineated. Some police officers have also mainly been given the task of making contact with external partners during operations. This means that not all dialogue police officers carry out all the work described in this chapter.

It is possible to divide dialogue police work into tasks before an event, tasks during an event and tasks after an event (see figure 1).

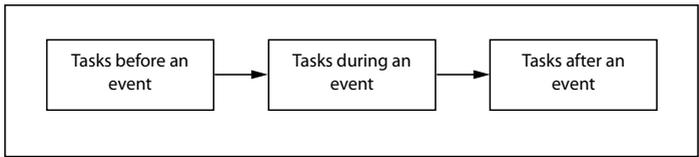


Figure 1. Division of dialogue work in terms of time.

However, the situation is often more complex because under normal circumstances dialogue work entails establishing continuous dialogue with groups organising manifestations where many demonstrations/manifestations are interconnected (see Swedish National Police Academy, 2005). There is no clear end to the dialogue. It is, for example, difficult to say when dialogue after one demonstration becomes dialogue prior to a demonstration. Adang & Stott (2004) point out that each large-scale police operation too often is regarded as an individual phenomenon and the fact that the final stages of one operation also can be part of the preparatory stage of the next operation is therefore largely overlooked.

Another factor is that the work of the dialogue police only forms part of a larger whole. For example, the methods used by the police and the agreements made during one specific demonstration are not only of significance for that demonstration but can also affect subsequent demonstrations. Wahlström & Oskarsson (2006) comment that sub-operations included in police negotiations with organisers overlap, e.g. original agreements can become a pattern for new discussions which in turn can lead to new agreements. The course of events in a protest can also be affected by experiences from earlier protests.

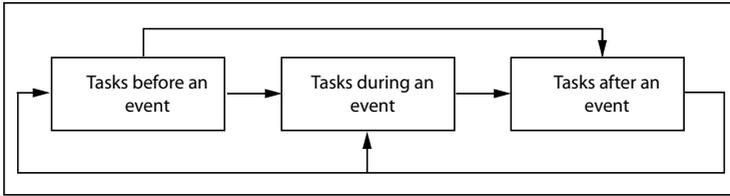


Figure 2. Dialogue police work –a complex process.

To aid understanding, I have chosen to present dialogue police work before an event, during an event and after an event in separate chapters.

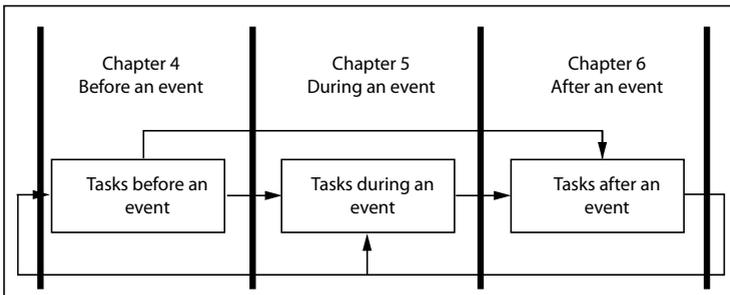


Figure 3. Description of dialogue police work as presented in the report.

The activities in figure 3 are closely interrelated, which means that certain matters are unavoidably discussed in more than one part of the report. Some central themes which recur throughout the report include the problems of drawing boundaries with other departments within the organisation, information processes and between the dialogue work and the commander function.

In various parts of the report I refer to a theoretical model (see table 1), which is the result of a study carried out on the disturbances during the EU summit in Gothenburg (Granström, 2002). The model is based on the Elaborated Social Identity Model of crowd events, ESIM (Reicher, 1996; Drury & Reicher, 2000; 2005).

In brief, according to the model there are two processes taking place – a mitigating process and a conflict creating process. These processes take place simultaneously and either result in a loss of confidence or in the police and the demonstrators successfully keeping the trust in each other. There are four sub-processes linked to the mitigating and conflict creating processes.

<b>Mitigating</b>	<b>Conflict Creating</b>
Nuanced	Categorising
Organising	Chaos creating
Reassuring/figurative disarming	Provoking
Varied presentation	One-sided presentation

Table 1: Mitigating and conflict creating processes (Granström, 2002).

The first subprocess in the mitigating and conflict creating processes consists of a nuanced versus a categorising approach. A nuanced approach means that the demonstrators or the police are able to discern variations in individuals and subgroups in their own group and in the other group. A categorising approach means that all individuals in a group are viewed from a stereotyped perspective. This forms an “us and them” mentality in which positive qualities are ascribed to one’s own group (it is humanised) and negative qualities are ascribed to the other group (it is rendered anonymous).

The second subprocess in the mitigating and conflict creating processes consists of organising or chaos-creating measures. Organising means a method adopted in order to organise demonstrations, i.e. planning, preparation, rules, structure, factual information, clear goals, clear leadership. Organising brings about relaxation. Chaos creating means processes that create anxiety, uncertainty and confusion, e.g. senseless destruction, lack of information, spreading rumours and altered plans. Chaos creating brings about fear.

The third subprocess in the mitigating and conflict creating processes consists of reassuring and provoking methods. Reassuring refers to something which an individual or a group does to make the other group lay down their weapons both literally and metaphorically. Provoking means what one group does to make another group defend itself, run away or attack.

The fourth subprocess in the mitigating and conflict creating processes consists of a varied presentation as opposed to a one-sided presentation. A varied presentation means that several different images and points of view of many groups are made available to the general public (e.g. on TV). The image of a group or an event is therefore made more complex and is problematised. One-sided presentation means that only one aspect, one image or one point of view is shown.

Communication consists of the transfer of a message between a sender and a receiver. A good understanding of aspects such as the conditions for sending and receiving and assimilating certain information can facilitate the exchange of information between a sender and a receiver (see, for example, Fiske, 1991; Larsson, 1997; Goldkuhl, 1998). A communication process can therefore be made more favourable if the sender and receiver have previously established social contact. Examples of this will be provided in various parts of this report.

Some researchers have pointed out that knowledge of the protest culture and specific activist organisations and networks is of decisive importance since it enables the police to deal with protest actions in a satisfactory manner. Knowledge is gained more easily through direct contact with organisers and individual activists and that knowledge is accumulated over time (Peterson, 2006. See also Wahlström & Oskarsson, 2006).

The fact that good communication can take place and valuable knowledge can be gained are two of the most important reasons

why it is advantageous to make use of designated dialogue police who have been in contact with the same main persons on a continuous basis.



## 4. Before an event

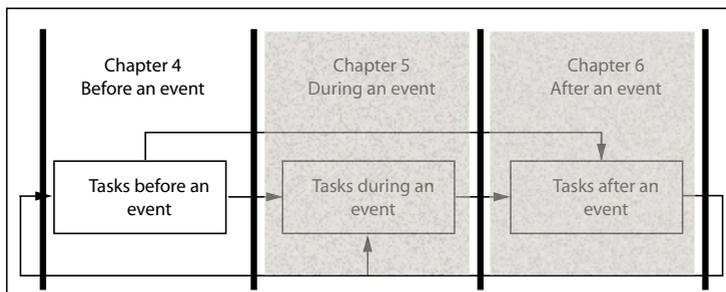


Figure 4: Before an event

**THE CONDITIONS FOR** cooperation with organisers and key persons prior to an event can vary. One factor which contributed to the organisers' distrust of the police before the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001 was the police methods used a couple of months previously during the meeting of EU finance ministers in Malmö (Oskarsson, 2001).

Both researchers and the Gothenburg Committee state that it is important that cooperation with organisers should begin well in advance (see SOU 2002:122; Abrahamsson & Johanssons, 2002; Oskarsson, 2001; 2002).

Dialogue prior to an event can contribute to create order since it will bring about different kinds of agreements. Contact can also help reduce the risks of stereotyping. At the planning stage there is also a better chance of preventing conduct which may be perceived as provoking during the demonstration. It is also possible to help ensure a varied presentation before an event takes place,

which can have a positive effect on confidence in the police during the event itself (see Granström, 2002).

Police services in western democracies have increasingly attempted to cooperate with activists in planning political protests. This development is a reflection of increased support given to activists' rights as citizens. It has meant that political networks are now often guaranteed a public space. Activists have responded to the strategies adopted by the police to make protests more predictable and attempt to avoid violent confrontations by either welcoming the safer conditions, remaining ambivalent towards these developments or completely rejecting the new forms of cooperation adopted by the police (Peterson & Oskarsson, 2002).

Previously, there was minimal communication between the police and demonstrators (della Porta & Reiter, 1998). This could easily give rise to misunderstandings which could lead to confrontation (Stark, 1972). A negotiation-orientated strategy has meant that a certain form of order has been accepted. Before the event, the police and the demonstrators discuss a large number of issues, e.g. transport to and from the event, first aid, meeting places and various set times. Agreements have even been made on arrests at civil disobedience actions. Organisers are normally responsible for having their own guards, who are aware of the agreements that have been made with the police (McPhail et al, 1998).

In the new way of dealing with protests, the most important thing for the police is not to win the fight but to be able to avoid it (Winter, 1998). Researchers have pointed out that the most important weapon the police have when dealing with demonstrations is the skill to negotiate with organisers rather than the ability to act in a repressive manner. However those researchers point out that it is normal for police personnel involved in an operation to have a different perception and to feel dissatisfied if they have not been allowed to take physical action against demonstrators. One central issue for the police is therefore to make the po-

lice officers in the front line understand the benefits of the ability to avoid a confrontation (Fillieule & Jobard, 1998).

I and other negotiators who were recruited to form part of the dialogue police from the beginning came to the conclusion that, although dialogue work was similar in some ways to the concept of negotiation, there were also some marked differences. Negotiations in crisis situations are normally isolated single events and the police personnel involved do not normally negotiate with the same individuals on other occasions. However, we found that dialogue work involves recurring contact with the same individuals. We considered it extremely important to take this into consideration when formulating a methodology for dialogue police work.

Researchers emphasise that a traditional negotiation-orientated strategy which could be adopted by the police during planned protest actions involves the use of a number of tricks to deceive the counterpart, bringing about a situation whereby the counterpart gives and the police take (Waddington, 1994). As far as dialogue police work was concerned, we came to the conclusion that it was more rational to emphasise a range of arguments and not attempt to deceive the counterpart. Efforts would be made to establish mutual giving and taking.

We judged that whereas it was certainly possible to deceive the counterpart on one or more occasions, it was foolish to underestimate the counterpart's ability to analyse the situation. We therefore considered that a strategy consisting of deception, in which it was mainly the police who gained any advantage from the negotiations, was doomed to failure in the long run. Instead, we came to the conclusion that we must aim to establish a genuine dialogue built on mutual respect. Because it takes an extremely long time to build up even the slightest confidence in some circles, wrong behaviour leading to another party feeling deceived can have serious consequences. In that case, it does not matter whether it was due to bad luck or whether it was a conscious tactic.

The possibility of any dialogue police officer entering into dialogue with these individuals or with anyone from the group they represent can be destroyed for a long time to come or, at worst, for ever. The dialogue concept is a new concept and has naturally suffered from some teething troubles. Nevertheless, it is vital for the police organisation as a whole to accept that the dialogue police are not a tactical component for deceiving a counterpart. Furthermore, the risk of a counterpart feeling deceived must be minimised. Unless such an approach is adopted, it is impossible to establish any genuine dialogue or mutual respect, which is a prerequisite for the dialogue concept.

Another important starting point for the dialogue police, for example when the police are unable to consent to a march route requested by the organisers, is not just to issue a negative reply, but to be creative and attempt to find an alternative way of fulfilling the fundamental objectives (see also Reicher et al, 2004).

## **4.1 Influencing the event**

### ***4.1.1 Events where an application for a permit has been submitted***

**WHEN AN ORGANISER APPLIES** for a permit and there is a substantial risk of confrontation, the permit unit, the dialogue police and commanders normally become involved in the decision-making process and have contact with the organisers.

The main purpose of the dialogue is normally to discuss the actual route of the march and different set times. The purpose is also to bring about a more general exchange of information that may help the manifestation to be held as planned.

Less important events are occasionally dealt with only by the permit unit. Previously, in events with a low-level threat, the dialogue police mainly had contact with the organisers only at the beginning of an operation. This approach has now changed and attempts are made to contact the organisers at an early stage. One example of cooperation with the organisers before the operation:

*“An application is received from an organiser to arrange a demonstration at a stated time, beginning from a specified place and ending at another specified place. The organiser has also provided the desired route for the march.*

*The police authority wants to change the route for the march and to end it at a different place from from what the organiser requested. The time is also considered unsuitable. If the march is delayed at all, it will clash with another event. The police authority therefor wants the march to begin earlier.*

*The dialogue police cooperate with the organisers. The route for the march and the final destination of the march is changed, though the original objections put forward by the police were adjusted to some extent. As a result of the dialogue, the organisers understand the police authority’s problem with events occurring at the same time. It is agreed that the march will begin at the original time, but if there is any delay in starting the march, the participants in the demonstration will remain where they are and wait for the police authority to inform them that they can proceed, taking the other event into consideration.”<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>5</sup> The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved.

#### **4.1.2 Events where no application for a permit has been submitted**

**IT HAS PROVED TO BE POSSIBLE** to reach agreement with organisers even though they have not submitted an application for a permit. On some occasions, discussions between the dialogue police and key persons have resulted in an application for a permit being submitted.

Some groups are not very willing to discuss issues with the police. The aim then is to attempt to cooperate with the organisers once the event has begun. Wahlström & Oskarsson (2006) point out that cooperation with the police is not acceptable in certain groups. Even if the organisers have little confidence in the police and are unwilling to try to reach agreement, it can nevertheless be possible to find a solution which is acceptable to both parties. One example of how dialogue with a key person prior to an event had a considerable effect on whether or not the event could be held:

*“The dialogue police are in contact with a key person before an event for which no permit application was submitted. The starting point and destination of the march emerged during this contact. The time, the planned route for the march and matters of maintaining order are discussed. The organisers do not want a lot of police officers in the actual march or close to it.*

*The police express their misgivings on maintaining order. The organisers state that they themselves are able keep order.*

*It emerges that there are different factions among the organisers. One faction wants confrontation. The dialogue police express their concern at this and ask the key person if he will*

*take part in any disturbances. The key person says that he will not take part in any such activities and confirms when making this announcement that there are different opinions as to whether the unofficial agreement with the police should be kept to. The key person says that he will definitely not reveal the existence of the agreement if it becomes necessary to break the agreements discussed with the police. The key person states at the same time that he will call and inform them if he personally is going to break off contact with the police and the dialogue police can then interpret the information however they wish.*

*The dialogue police officer reports his analysis of the situation to the strategic commander who decides, on the basis of this analysis, that the police should adopt non-violent methods to prevent the participants from taking the desired route for the march and that participants themselves should be allowed to be responsible for maintaining order, provided that order is successfully maintained.*

*The event took place in a calm atmosphere. The police authority was satisfied with the outcome. Similar events held previously had resulted in extensive damage and confrontation.*

*The dialogue with the key person meant that the gold commander decided not to recommend a confrontational solution. That not only had a positive effect as far as the police were concerned, but the organisers also appeared satisfied both with the fact that the event was able to take place and with the large number of participants.”<sup>6</sup>*

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6 The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved and my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

## 4.2 External partners

**DURING OPERATIONS**, the dialogue police organise activities to enable cooperation with external partners such as the social services, *nattvandrare* [night walkers helping to prevent young people getting into trouble], *Farsor & Morsor på stan* (Mums and Dads in the city), the City of Stockholm, *Stockholms lokaltrafik* [Stockholm Public Transport], business persons, etc.

The overall aim of the cooperation is to minimise damage to property and injury to persons. It is also a question of attempting to prevent recruitment to extremist groups. Violence at demonstrations is not only a police problem. That is why it is important to involve others in this work. Some researchers have emphasised the importance of collective activities of a voluntary, non-public nature. A large number of robust networks of this type strengthen civil society. Civil society can provide effective support for democracy, but that support must be independent and well established and there must be a willingness to act for the benefit of democracy (Hadenius, 2001).

In the international negotiation strategy described by other researchers, it is clear that the police did not wish to be accompanied by, for example, lawyers and others who were considered to be difficult to manipulate in discussions concerning the planning of protests (Waddington, 1994). The design of the dialogue concept differs from this, as described above. Instead, there is an attempt to involve as many people as possible. Persons and organisations outside the police organisation are seen as a resource which can help to ensure that fundamental freedoms and rights can be safeguarded in the best possible way.

Before an event, it is a question of assessing approximately how many volunteers are willing to take part and build up a structure enabling information to be conveyed as smoothly as possible. Ordering such things as food and drink to keep stamina up and to encourage the citizens taking part is also vital.

For some external cooperation partners it is important to show that they distance themselves from the police. The police have no control over the volunteers and it is up to them to decide what form their cooperation is to take during an operation. Information from external partners can be important. They often have well-developed networks which have occasionally helped to establish contact between organisers and the police.

If external cooperation partners are present and understand the reasons for the methods adopted by the police, there is a better chance that they will gain a more nuanced perspective than if they merely have access to information in the media. Information can also prevent them stereotyping certain groups so easily. Traders are often concerned that protests will result in extensive damage. They demand information. It is therefore common before large events for someone from the dialogue police and the police command to hold an information meeting with traders.

### **4.3 Contributing to assessments**

**IT HAS BEEN STATED** repeatedly that the dialogue police have contributed valuable information which has formed the basis for assessments by various decision-makers before and during the start of operations. This has probably contributed to greater internal acceptance of the work of the dialogue police. One example of how a senior officer assessed information from the dialogue police during debriefing after an operation:

*“A representative from the criminal intelligence service asked what effect a misleading threat analysis can have for those serving in units on the streets. One senior officer in an external unit stated that as far as mental preparation was concerned, the threat analysis from the criminal intelligence service was not of great importance because they mainly*

*listened to the dialogue police's assessment of the risk of confrontation”*

Training materials for the mobile concept clearly state that the aim of the dialogue police is not to gather intelligence (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005). However, even though they are not engaged in intelligence dialogue police officers can contribute a large amount of information that may be of use prior to and at the start of operations, e.g. how many participants an organiser estimates will attend and the final destination of an unauthorised demonstration. Part of this information derives from the fact that the dialogue police perform their own analysis of a particular situation.

## 5. During an event

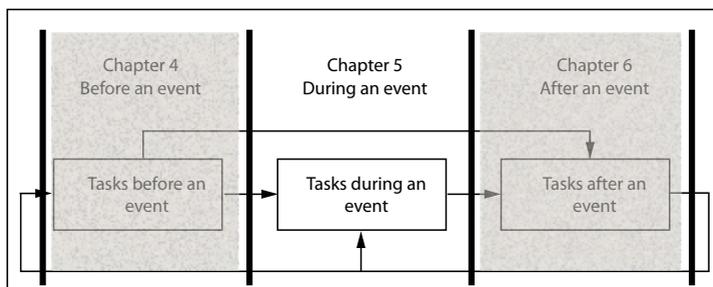


Figure 5: During an event.

**THE CONDITIONS FOR COOPERATING** with organisers and key persons during an event vary in the same way as prior to an event. If an application for a permit has been submitted, it is naturally easier to make contact with and influence an organiser than if the event has no permit.

Research has been carried out on the way anonymity affects individuals in crowds. Previous theories maintained that anonymity leads to lack of behavioural norms (see, for example, Zimbardo, 1969), whereas later research indicates that anonymity will instead mean that individuals are more likely to follow the norms applying to the social context in question (Spears & Lea, 1994; Postmes & Spears, 1998). The police can contribute towards the creation of a social identity, particularly if they take action against the whole crowd, but they can also do it by acting against single individuals (Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998; Drury & Reicher, 1999; Adang & Cuvelier, 2001).

Several researchers have found that the police prefer to subdivide a crowd into a violent minority and a peaceful majority, with

the understanding that the violent minority is able to lead the majority. The police therefore do not see themselves as a contributing factor in any violence which occurs. Instead, they consider the reason to lie in the crowd. According to this perspective, it is a case of identifying “agitators” or “ringleaders” and simply removing them (see Stott & Reicher, 1998; Reicher et al, 2004).

This approach entails certain risks because police intervention also affects members of the crowd who initially did not support the provocateurs. Nevertheless, those members may side against the police if an intervention appears brutal or if they are treated as though they were perpetrators through the police officers’ body language or through physical contact or verbal expression (see Stott & Reicher, 1998; Reicher et al, 2004; see also Guvå, 2005). Intervention by the police can not only give rise to negative consequences in the short term. An intervention that is perceived as unfair can lead a number of individuals to join groups advocating confrontational solutions.

Both the police and the demonstrators normally start out as a heterogeneous collection of individuals, even though they may be viewed as a homogenous group from the counterpart’s perspective.

If the police carry out a collective intervention against demonstrators, it creates an “us versus them” situation which may lead to that a group which started out as heterogeneous will unite through the perception of the police as an assailant. This leads to a considerable risk that the conflict may escalate and that the police may be obliged to resort to increasingly robust methods. This may have the effect of increasing group solidarity still further in the group. Events during disturbances are formed by a complex interplay of processes within and between groups (see, for example, Reicher, 1996; 2001; Drury & Reicher, 2000; 2005; Stott & Drury, 2000; Granström, 2002).

It is advantageous if self-policing can be established during manifestations, where those responsible for the protest action endeavour to avoid any disorder (Marx, 1981; Waddington, 1994; Waddington & Cricher, 2000; Reicher et al, 2004). Dialogue between the police and the organisers can instigate and facilitate such initiative.

Disseminating information before a situation arises can increase one group's understanding of the other group's behaviour. This can reduce the risk that a certain type of behaviour leads to stereotyping or provoking or chaos creating (see Granström, 2002).

If the risk of violence or the occurrence of violence forces the police to lay down certain restrictions for a crowd, it is important to clarify why those restrictions have become necessary and to arrange alternative ways for the crowd to achieve its legitimate objectives (see also Reicher et al, 2004).

## **5.1 Influencing the event**

### ***5.1.1 Events where an application for a permit has been submitted***

**IT IS IMPORTANT FOR THE POLICE** to be able to make contact with an organiser easily during an operation. Situations can change quickly. A need may arise for an immediate change of the organisation of an event. The ability to disseminate information quickly in order to prevent the spread of rumours and calm a situation down can also be important.

During the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001, representatives of *Göteborgsaktionen* [the Gothenburg action] (the network with which the police had contact) and others were successful in “cool-

ing” down an extremely hostile atmosphere among demonstrators the day after the police had opened fire and injured a demonstrator. Those representatives worked very hard and were successful in counteracting rumours being spread and subduing the level of hostility among violence prone demonstrators (Oskarsson, 2001).

Normally the dialogue police meet the organisers when an event begins. Opportunities for contact by telephone are normally taken advantage of whenever it is considered suitable. The better the means of contact established between the dialogue police and the organisers, the easier it is to establish dialogue. A quick telephone call can be enough to reach an agreement. Naturally it is an advantage if the same dialogue police officers who have had contact with key persons for a longer period of time are involved. It is easier to build up trust.

Two examples of how contact with an organiser reduced the risk of confrontation<sup>7</sup>:

*“A need arises during a march to change the agreed route for the march. A dialogue police officer telephones an organiser, who accepts the change immediately and participants in the manifestation adopt the new route for the march without any problems or misunderstandings.”*

*“No flags are permitted while travelling from a demonstration. Complaints are received that, despite this prohibition, flags had been waved. One telephone call was enough and the organiser immediately attends to the behaviour of the participants involved. Police personnel did not need to carry out any intervention against these individuals, which could have caused problems and the situation to escalate.”*

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<sup>7</sup> The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved and my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

### **5.1.2 Events where no application for a permit has been submitted**

**WHEN NO PERMIT** application has been submitted, it is essential to know the key persons. Previous contacts are often extremely important in enabling dialogue to be established.

When there are key persons, which normally is the case in informal networks with a political agenda, it may be possible to influence a crowd to act in a certain way. This often occurs in combination with different methods adopted by the police. One example of this is given below:

*“Information is received that there is going to be an occupation of a party information booth. Through coordination with the political parties information booths close earlier than planned. One party has promised that some persons could stay in the booth during the night. That party information booth gets occupied.*

*The party whose booth is occupied does not consider it necessary to remove the activists because people have been promised that they can stay in the booth overnight in any case.*

*Police personnel take up station close to the activity to ensure that the situation does not get out of hand. The police personnel take possession of items such as a football that went astray. The atmosphere is tense.*

*The dialogue police contact key persons whom they recognise from previous occasions. The silver/tactical commander gives the dialogue police room for negotiations. A solution is discussed. If the activists assume responsibility for keeping order in the immediate vicinity of the activity, the police*

*personnel will regroup and only intervene if the activists are unable to keep order. An agreement is reached.*

*It is also agreed that the activists will turn down the volume of their music while a pro-feminist party makes speeches. The police personnel regroup. The music is turned down as agreed. The booth occupation takes place calmly. The participants gave the impression that they were happy with the solution.”<sup>8</sup>*

## **5.2 External partners**

**ONE IMPORTANT TASK** for the dialogue police is to coordinate external cooperation partners to enable them to contribute to reducing the risk of confrontation and other destructive behaviour. One example of this:

*“A misgiving arose among both the organisers and the dialogue police during a manifestation that young people who were not actually interested in the event would cause damage when the event ended.*

*When the manifestation had ended, a large number of young people, mainly from the outskirts of the city, moved away from the main event.*

*The organisers actively attempted to prevent these young people from causing damage. This and the fact that external cooperation partners had spread out along the road to the underground, de-escalated the situation. This became clear when a frustrated young person shouted to another young person: “It’s no fun when there are a load of hobby police everywhere”.*

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<sup>8</sup> The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

*There were not enough external partners to cover the road beyond the underground and some young people took the opportunity to cause damage such as breaking car wing mirrors. However, most of the young people got on the underground when nothing exciting like damages or fights with the police happened.”<sup>9</sup>*

Researchers have referred to methods adopted by volunteers in the USA during protests. In the USA, volunteers act together to isolate provocateurs by such means as appointing specially designated peacekeepers/guards who intervene when violence occurs, e.g. by standing between the “black” group (which refers to a hard core in the group who often wear black clothes) and the police (Vinthagen, 2002). In Stockholm, there are examples of volunteers who have played a similar role in some situations during operations. However it was not a question of a “black” block, but rather of loose combinations of gangs of young people. The presence of volunteers and actions taken in front of police lines has been instrumental in preventing an incipient escalation in several cases. These activities can become problematic if a situation has escalated too much. It is up to the volunteers to take up such a position, but at an early stage the dialogue police point out that the volunteers must consider their own safety. The dialogue police have an important role when it comes to preparing a risk assessment and keeping volunteers up-to-date on that assessment.

External cooperation partners are normally invited to a briefing before an operation. The dialogue police also take part in this briefing. The number of participants at these meetings varies. Between fifty and a hundred people usually take part. The largest briefing was attended by three hundred people. As some external partners have contact with others in turn, the number of people in reality can be much higher than the numbers attending the meetings.

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<sup>9</sup> The example is based on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

A commander usually introduces the briefing. Information is given on what is expected during the day and the requests from the police. There is also an opportunity for the partners to give their views on the design of the operation and to point out important factors for the police to take into account.

A coordination body is normally appointed. This consists of at least two dialogue police officers and some cooperation partners who wish to share information from their respective organisations and receive information to pass on to their organisations. The coordination body attempts to take up station at the place which is considered at that moment to be most critical to enable it to convey as much relevant information as possible. Through a considerable amount of contact during an operation, by listening to police internal radio traffic and through their efforts to take up station at the most critical place, the coordination body normally gains an extremely good insight into what is happening and what it appears could happen. The involved dialogue police officers have a good opportunity to feel the atmosphere and analyse critical circumstances in a specific situation (see sections 6.3.2 and 6.3.3).

An IT system (SMS service) is used in large operations to enable information to reach out quickly. Information can be aimed at specific partners or be sent to everyone. Usually a dialogue police officer in the coordination body is responsible for this service.

Through the cooperation partners it is possible to quickly release information, for example, that open-air cafes in a specific area should take in their tables and chairs to prevent them from being destroyed or from being used as weapons.

Since traders usually are concerned to be exposed to damage, information on how demonstrations are progressing is appreciated. Effective dissemination of information is also essential for making external partners feel welcome and useful. They are offered different kinds of food and drink during an operation.

Cooperation partners often communicate with participants in a demonstration. If cooperation partners are kept informed continuously, it is possible that they may be able to counteract chaos creation. Sending out information via SMS has an important part to play in this, but briefings at the beginning of operations are also very important. As I stated above, the police do not have control over the volunteers, and it is up to them to decide what form their cooperation with the police is to take. Senior officers in the police organisation have sometimes found it difficult to understand and accept this.

## **5.3 Contributing to assessments**

### ***5.3.1 Consequences of police methods***

**THIS TASK INVOLVES** drawing decision-makers' attention to the possible consequences of an action in the short and the long term, based on observations or knowledge of an ongoing or imminent action by the police. It may involve things like ensuring that a counterpart does not feel deceived and betrayed which is of decisive importance for the ability to establish fruitful dialogue in the future.

The organisation as a whole has increased its ability to understand possible consequences of certain police methods. One example of this:

*“During the disturbances in Copenhagen in spring 2007, demonstrations in support of those actions were held in Stockholm. The initial operations were considered to be important for the course of the protests and also for the “reclaim” activity which had been carried out on the first of May in previous years. The commanders decided to minimise the risk of confrontation and uniformed personnel operated*

*in such a way as to avoid any conflict flaring up between the police and the demonstrators.*

*If the police had behaved otherwise, the conflict between the demonstrators and the police could have escalated.*

*The protests in support of the Copenhagen demonstration were held calmly and an organised reclaim activity on the first of May did not take place.”<sup>10</sup>*

The dialogue police previously used a great deal of energy to point out inappropriate aspects of the police personnel’s procedures and planned action as far as escalation was concerned. One consequence of this was that the dialogue police were perceived as being in league with the demonstrators when they emphasised how the demonstrators were likely to perceive certain police behaviour. One example of when the dialogue police influenced police personnel to act differently:

*“The police had the task to protect a group who had applied for a demonstration permit. It was unusual for this group to apply for a permit. It had only happened on one previous occasion. This group usually attacked manifestations organised by groups with opposing opinions. Protecting this group was an unusual role for the police. It was also unusual for the group to be protected by the police.*

*The previous year, the police had been unsuccessful to some extent to protect this group on one occasion when persons holding opposing opinions were able to attack their march with stones. The group consisted of 800 – 1000 people, with around thirty individuals at the front of the march wearing masks and carrying shields.*

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10 The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved and on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

*Probably due to the previously reversed roles, a problematic situation arose on one occasion which could have escalated into a conflict between the police and the demonstrators during the march. Approximately ten police officers with helmets on stood with their protective shields turned towards the march, which had come to a halt. The marchers equipped with shields had also raised their shields in a similar way.*

*There was a distance of just over twenty metres between the police with shields and the demonstrators with shields and a kind of “no man’s land” had been formed. The atmosphere was tense. The dialogue police noticed the problem and pointed out to the responsible commander that it might be more appropriate for the police to face the other way as the police should be protecting the march. Four dialogue police entered the “no man’s land” and created a light-hearted atmosphere by smiling and talking to one another in a cheerful manner.*

*The police group changed their approach and showed that they were there to protect the demonstrators against attack. Most of the police officers turned around facing outwardly in relation to the demonstrators. The situation immediately became much calmer and a masked demonstrator was heard to say to another demonstrator: ‘You can’t work up any aggression when there are a load of blonde women running around’. This probably referred to the three female dialogue police officers who were blonde. The demonstrators began to lower their shields and the march started to move a short while later.’<sup>11</sup>*

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11 The example is based on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

Today it is unusual for reminders like that to be required (see also Granström et al, 2005). Problems arising are usually associated with individual police officers' attitude and ability to withstand stress, which may have serious consequences since actions of individual police officers risk drawing other police officers into a conflict. Deficient logistics (food and drink supply) can increase the risk of some individuals failing to perform in a professional manner.

The position taken up by the dialogue police in a crowd normally provides a good opportunity to see police behaviour from the demonstrators' point of view. The ability to draw attention to and alter police methods which may be perceived as provoking from the demonstrators' point of view is an important factor in avoiding escalation of a situation (see Granström, 2002). Individuals in crowds who start out with a desire to establish a confrontation with the police or who, for various reasons, develop such a desire find it more difficult to achieve their purpose.

Observations made in connection with dialogue police work indicate that it is difficult for a "ringleader" to influence a large crowd to act in a certain way himself without "help" from the police. This conclusion is in line with the results of research on the effect of police action against a crowd (see, for example, Stott & Reicher, 1998 and Reicher et al, 2004). Militant activists are well aware of the need to enlist the aid of the police when their tactics include provoking the police to attack the crowd (see Waddington, 2003).

Key persons and smaller groups in some crowds may have a considerable effect on the participants' actions (interaction with the police is also usually decisive for how a situation will unfold in these cases). As far as the importance of key persons and smaller groups is concerned, our observations differ from some international research. This may possibly have to do with the fact that the crowds which the dialogue police have been in contact with mainly are political groups which often consist of well-developed

informal networks (and not loosely amalgamated groups). Granström et al (2005) also touch upon the issue of the ability of key persons to influence an event. They know that there is a perception among participants in “reclaim” festivals that certain groups at large events such as the Stockholm event contain “experienced activists” who make more policy decisions than others and those decisions then apply to all activists. Peterson (2001) has also described similar perceptions among activists.

The fact that a police officer or a demonstrator may be provoked by someone in the other group or may misinterpret a situation can spark off processes within his own group and between the groups. Police research contains a good deal of empirical evidence of how police behaviour can spark off disorder and riots (see, for example, Waddington, 1994; 1999; Bessel & Emsley, 2000; Reicher et al, 2004). There is therefore a need for dialogue police officers to observe police methods from the perspective of a counterpart. The dialogue police can help other police officers to focus more on their own performance. Peterson (2006) points to the importance of having an internal control system during operations, particularly when dealing with chaotic and unstable situations (see also Waddington, 1991).

### **5.3.2 Crowd atmosphere**

**THIS TASK INVOLVES** recovering a good atmosphere in a crowd to increase the quality of operational decisions in order to minimise the risk of confrontation. Extensive experience and knowledge of previous events, individuals and groups, along with the more long-term presence of dialogue police officers in crowds, makes it easier for them to capture the atmosphere. This makes information from the dialogue police valuable when decisions are made.

An important factor in reducing the risk of stereotyping is the ability to identify that a crowd is made up of groups with differ-

ent intentions where negative behaviour on the part of isolated individuals or small groups is not necessarily significant for the group as a whole is.

The situation may be perceived as serious in one part of a demonstration, whereas the situation in another part may be perceived as calm. The situation barometer describes situations as green - a calm situation, yellow - an unclear situation; and red - a serious situation (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005). Dialogue police officers usually observe a crowd's behaviour for a longer period and it is therefore easier for them to understand and interpret certain behaviour. This can reduce the risk for a situation being perceived as chaotic or certain behaviour as provoking.

A relatively rancorous atmosphere which has continued for a fairly long time without resulting in any confrontation may therefore be assessed quite differently compared to when there has been no opportunity to monitor a process for a longer period of time. An example is given below of an occasion when a tactical commander chose to ascribe great importance to the dialogue police's assessment of an atmosphere:

*“Dialogue police officers are present at a demonstration consisting of approximately one thousand people. The demonstrators discover opposing activists in one place and around a hundred demonstrators make a run for that place. The other demonstrators remain calm. The opposing activists are removed by the police and around a hundred demonstrators manage to make another run towards that place, but nothing else happens. The other demonstrators remain calm and do not become involved in the events at the corner. The dialogue police observe the full sequence of events.*

*An operational commander is sitting with his helmet on in a police vehicle at the corner where the opposing activists*

*emerge. The commander shouts “situation red”, “situation red” and is clearly under stress. The tactical commander asks the dialogue coordinator to telephone the dialogue police officers in the field to obtain their assessment of the situation. The dialogue police officers inform him that their assessment is “situation green”. They also report that they have observed the two rushes. The tactical commander goes along with the assessment made by the dialogue police. No further measures are taken. No further rushes occur and the demonstration continues calmly.”<sup>12</sup>*

Unlike other police personnel, the dialogue police can take on the role of observer more easily and concentrate just on that task. A dialogue police officer is subject to far fewer disruptive factors in the form of stress and physical exertion than other operational police personnel in an operation. The dialogue police are therefore in a good position to gain a nuanced overall perspective of the atmosphere in the crowd.

### **5.3.3 Critical circumstances**

**THIS TASK INVOLVES** continuous efforts to predict likely developments and inform commanders of them. It involves the ability to capture and analyse critical circumstances in specific situations:

*“An unauthorised demonstration takes place. The dialogue police report that the demonstrators are likely to go to a particular place. The tactical commander gives an order that they should be allowed to, but a number of police officers block the demonstrators’ path by mistake. This is because the tactical commander changed an earlier decision to block off the road. For some reason this information had not reached the police officers in question. They therefore begin a forceful action to prevent the demonstrators from passing.*

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<sup>12</sup> The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved.

*The dialogue police see what is happening and relay the information to the tactical commander who clarifies the change of orders. Just as violence is about to break out, the police officers break off their action and the demonstrators are able to go to the place in question without any confrontation. After staying there for a short time, some individuals and small groups of demonstrators begin to leave the place. However, the main body of demonstrators remains there. The situation is calm.*

*Dialogue police officers in the field capture the atmosphere. Even though the crowd is relatively large, the dialogue police officers perceive there is a low risk for confrontation. They consider that the greatest potential risk for confrontation is if the people who left the demonstration will regroup in another place.*

*The tactical commander reduces the escort around the demonstration and instead begins to focus on where the demonstrators are likely to regroup. Shortly afterwards around seventy-five demonstrators emerge at another place. Since police resources had been freed up earlier from the large group, this can easily be dealt with.*

*The large group is escorted by a small number of police officers. The atmosphere continues to be calm and individuals subsequently begin to leave. Finally, only isolated groups of demonstrators remain and there is no reason to continue escorting them, whereupon the tactical commander decides to discontinue the escort.”<sup>13</sup>*

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13 The example is based on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

A large number of orders are issued during an operation. The orders can easily be misunderstood and information can “fall between two stools”. Decision-makers also run the risk that the longer and more demanding the operation, the more likely it is that they will end up in situations where they are forced to make quick decisions with no time to carry out any prior analysis and planning. The dialogue police have no need to consider making any intervention themselves and often have time to consider and discuss matters with each other. They are in a good position to predict the likely progress of events, to capture and analyse critical circumstances in a specific situation. At the same time there is a risk that the dialogue police will not have sufficient understanding of the difficulties facing other personnel. It may also cause problems for commanders when the dialogue police request certain actions and the practical resources are not available in the situation in question. This requires the dialogue police to carry out a continuous critical assessment of their own behaviour.

One important factor, which was touched on previously, is that the counterpart should perceive that the police keep to made agreements. In a chaotic situation, police action caused by thoughtlessness or misapprehension can easily provoke a counterpart. The fact that the dialogue police have considerable knowledge of both a counterpart and police plans, along with considerable awareness of the current situation, enables them to analyse the likely consequences of actions or lack of actions on the part of the police. The spatial location of the dialogue police officers allows them to be one step ahead in awareness of critical circumstances in a specific situation and to predict the likely course of events. External cooperation partners such as Farsor & Morsor (Mams and Dads) have an important role in this context. They are used to be in troubled environments and can tell whether there is a high-level risk of confrontation in a specific place.

## 5.4 A presence with a de-escalating effect

**RESEARCH HAS SHOWN** that if police officers deal with members of a crowd in a friendly, open manner, the level of hostility is much lower than when a strategy of keeping a distance, avoiding informal interaction and treating the crowd with caution is adopted (Adang & Cuvelier, 2001).

The dialogue police can through their presence reduce the feeling of anonymity among some activists. In some cases this appears to have a moderating effect on the course of events. Previous built up contacts and trust with some persons can also make dialogue easier.

Research on the Gothenburg disturbances indicate that plain clothes police officers had a disarming, non-provoking influence due to the fact that they were wearing casual clothes (Granström, 2002).

The fact that dialogue police were unarmed was an advantage on several occasions. It was an important symbolic gesture. It is understandable that people with experience of other regimes, where force of arms on the part of the police plays a central role, may think that the police are against the people. Being unarmed can serve to clarify that the dialogue police are there to help those people to be allowed to demonstrate and not to use forcible means against them. One example of this is given below:

*"A minister of foreign affairs made a visit to Sweden. That gave rise to great concern among people who had fled that country. In their eyes the minister was associated with various forms of brutal outrage. It was considered an insult that Sweden had invited a representative from that regime.*

*A protest against the visit was organised during which*

*police personnel had pressed the alarm button for reinforcements. The situation was deteriorating and radio cars had been called to the place from many areas of the Stockholm region. The atmosphere was acrimonious. The police in the field calling for reinforcements were understandably under a great deal of pressure.*

*Two dialogue police officers were called in and went to the place. It transpired that they had previously been in contact with one of the participants. A dialogue was established and the person concerned summoned the leaders and an order was issued over a public address system to calm the situation.*

*The aim of the protest was to attract the attention of media, which the dialogue police officers considered had been achieved. The dialogue police and representatives of the protestors agreed that the fact that people were able to demonstrate for their sake in Sweden was an important democratic principle. The main point put forward by the dialogue police was that it was wrong to demonstrate against a violent regime using violent methods.*

*In the context in question, it was extremely important that the dialogue police officers were unarmed. The fact that the police were unarmed caused some surprise among those taking part in the manifestation and helped to create the impression that these police officers were there to help the participants demonstrate. The dialogue police officers moved around among the demonstrators, who had a tremendous need to express what the regime in the country they had fled from had done to them and their families. The presence of the dialogue police officers made it possible for the participants to express their anger.*

*The dialogue police officers listened and commented that it was important for the participants' opinions to be expressed. The uniformed police personnel also changed their approach and took off their helmets, which made the atmosphere calmer.*

*In the end, four uniformed police officers and the two dialogue police officers, working together, were sufficient to police the manifestation. The participants appeared satisfied at how the protest had evolved. They also received a great deal of coverage in the media that evening.”<sup>14</sup>*

The presence of the dialogue police officers appears to have had a restraining effect on the actions of some police officers in a number of situations. This applies particularly when dialogue police officers have a good knowledge of colleagues who are known to be openly critical to the tactics. Police officers themselves have given the impression of being aware that their behaviour was contrary to the SPT concept and have been more careful in their actions, for example avoiding derogatory comments and other behaviour which may be provoking.

At the disturbance in Nørrebro, Denmark, in 1993, the plain clothes police officers' methods were perceived as being provoking and this contributed to an escalation of violence. Ever since then, those police officers have had the worst reputation among demonstrators. There were reasons for questioning whether they had their own agenda which differed from the intentions of the police command (Peterson, 2006).

Activists in Sweden have commented in media and in their own forums that plain clothes police officers acted in a provocative way even when the atmosphere has been relatively calm. Criticism has also consisted of that plainclothes police have acted in disguise in crowds and used batons too much. Police officers are

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<sup>14</sup> The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

now being specially trained to carry out civil actions as part of the SPT concept (Romeo police) – and guidelines have been issued which could help to reduce the above criticism.

The dialogue police view of police methods has been channelled and adapted to gain internal acceptance to a greater extent than previously. This, together with greater understanding among police personnel at different organisational levels of the importance of acting in a balanced way means that the presence of the dialogue police is now less important.

In some contexts the presence of dialogue police officers has appeared to serve as a reminder for police personnel of the importance of communicating and taking advantage of opportunities to communicate. The general rise in ability in the organisation has also made it less important for the dialogue police to be present. However, in some situations, the presence of dialogue police is still important from the point of view of de-escalating a situation, as is made clear in the above example. Neither is it unusual for information to be time critical, in other words the situation can escalate if information does not arrive or an opportunity to tone down a situation can come to nothing. In these cases, it is important for information to reach the correct receiver quickly.

In Genoa, as in Gothenburg, the lines of communication between the police and the protestors often failed. The organisers were unable to make contact with the police in situations where it was extremely important to do so (della Porta & Reiter, 2006a).

In this context, the dialogue police have the important role of ensuring that information channels to the police command are short. Such a designated function also makes the situation easier for some participants in a crowd. These participants know whom to turn to ensure that the information will have a good chance to immediately reach the commander. Prior to the EU summit in Gothenburg, it was considered important that the police unit which made contact with networks and organisations should be of such a

size that these police officers were able to become known within these groups. The aim was to bring about a situation whereby open, personal contact was possible (Oskarsson, 2002). This is also valid for the Stockholm police dialogue unit.

## 5.5 Handling a situation which has arisen

**SITUATIONS MAY ARISE** during an operation when dialogue police methods can be disarming or have the effect to create order. Such actions can also help prevent stereotyping by humanising both dialogue police officers and other police officers. A few examples<sup>15</sup>:

*“When a crowd became surrounded by police, an activist made contact with a dialogue police officer. One individual in the crowd had become seriously ill and needed water immediately. The dialogue officer made sure that water was obtained. It was possible to remedy the person’s illness. This was not only good for that person, but it also had a positive influence and prevented the situation from escalating.”*

*“When the police pushed forward, an activist was injured. She had been run over by a vehicle. Some activists had stopped and bent down to attend to their comrade. One police officer had not seen what had happened and was about to use his baton against what he saw as a group of people refusing to move. A dialogue police officer was able to prevent this and help to find an ambulance.”*

*“A crowd moves forward and a police officer slips and falls under the people moving forward. A dialogue officer is standing in the immediate vicinity and is able to go into the crowd and help the officer to get up. Besides the fact that this*

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<sup>15</sup> The examples are based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved and on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

*action may have helped the police officer to avoid injury, it also avoided an intervention to rescue the police officer.*

*“Violence could be prevented by removing a single person who was under the influence of alcohol and who was about to begin to provoke a large group.”*

*“Activists contacted a dialogue police officer saying that a few aggressive individuals from an opposing group will be assaulted unless the police remove them. The aggressive individuals had succeeded in getting into an area where the activists were holding an event. The tactical commander decided that the aggressive individuals would be removed by plain clothes police personnel. The plain clothes officers established contact with dialogue police officers in order to locate the individuals. They were then removed from the area.”*



## 6. After an event

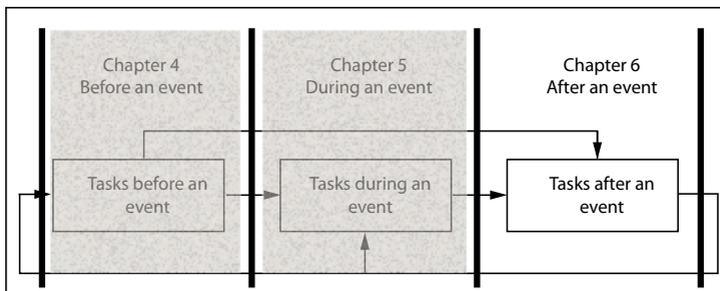


Figure 6: After an event.

**IN ORDER TO BRING ABOUT** favourable conditions for future events the work after an operation is essential.

One important factor is the ability to contribute to a varied presentation. On several occasions, dialogue police officers have observed that statements by the police in media have a considerable impact in this context. A statement can provoke and contribute to stereotyping, i.e. it can instigate or strengthen a conflict-creating process which has already begun and it can also tone down conflicts and help to bring about a mitigating process (see also Granström, 2002).

It is also important to have follow-up meetings after a demonstration with all the parties involved. This is to build trust and to provide each other with valuable views.

Police actions can subsequently result in a process which leads to a change in tactics (Winter, 1998):

1. Protest action.
2. The police take action.
3. Public criticism of police methods.
4. The police accept the criticism.
5. Identity crisis within the police concerning how protest actions are to be dealt with.
6. Discussion of a new philosophy to deal with protest actions.

If there is an extensive debate in media on the use of force by the police in which there are powerful forces advocating human rights, the police are generally less inclined to adopt robust measures (see della Porta, 1996). If, on the other hand, there is little criticism in media after the police have taken action, the police tend to reason that the use of more force to control disorder has the blessing of the silent majority (Wisler & Tackenberg, 2000). The public debate after an event is therefore of great importance for the methods adopted by the police at future protests and can also affect the scale of the protests (Wisler & Tackenberg, 2000).

## 6.1 External contacts

**ONE IMPORTANT TASK OF THE DIALOGUE POLICE** is to arrange coordination meetings after operations with external partners and the persons responsible for demonstrations. Contact is made by telephone and through personal meetings.

Cooperation after an event reduces the risk of stereotyping. Different behaviour can be explained. The risk of behaviour being perceived as provoking and chaos creating in future events may be reduced. Effective cooperation can enable a mitigating process to come about (see also Granström, 2002).

The training material for the mobile concept states that it is important for the police authorities to continue to establish dialogue

with groups involved in demonstrations even after an operation. Contact after an event not only makes it easier to build long-term trust, it also enables valuable feedback on police operations to be obtained which afterwards can be communicated to the relevant commanders in the police organisation.

## 6.2 Evaluation

**IN ORDER TO DEVELOP ACTIVITIES** it is important to have debriefings and discuss problems after an operation. This increases the ability to act in a mitigating way at future events, e.g. by creating awareness of behaviour perceived as provoking. It can also create more understanding of different groups, which improves the ability to interpret individuals and groups in a more nuanced way (see also Granström, 2002).

Debriefings facilitate such developments. It is now considered normal at debriefings for a representative of the dialogue police to report on the dialogue police view of a range of occurrences. One example of criticism<sup>16</sup>:

*“The presence of helicopters above the manifestation was questioned at the debriefing because the noise irritated the participants. It is often difficult to hear what is said when a helicopter is hovering above or close to a demonstration.”*

One apparent consequence of better contact between dialogue police officers and commanders in the SPT organisation is that it is more common for feedback to be given directly without waiting for a debriefing to take place. Direct communication between individuals and follow up discussions in smaller groups facilitate feedback and exchanges of information between different commanders in the organisation. Such exchanges have proved to be profitable both at an organisational and an individual level.

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<sup>16</sup> The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved.



## 7. A long-term perspective

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO ADOPT** a long-term perspective to ensure that the police can meet the constitutional requirement which states that citizens must be able to take part in manifestations without any risk of violation of theirs or others' human freedoms and rights.

Researchers have indicated that events can be successfully controlled by police actions but that control can be achieved equally well by ensuring that police personnel in the field do not take action. The best way to control a situation is often for the police to wait and not intervene (Peterson, 2006). What the police refrain from doing is just as important as what they do (Waddington, 1994).

Several researchers have pointed out that police methods can lead to escalation of a situation both during a demonstration and in subsequent demonstrations (see, for example, Bessel & Emsley, 2000; Waddington, 1994). Actions by the police can be important for the police's ability to act on subsequent occasions. The conduct of the police in Malmö prior to the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001 was, for example, a consequence of the fact that it was not considered possible to implement pre-established offensive strategies due to the tone of the public debate (Swedish National Police Board, 2001). The strategic commander for the EU summit in Gothenburg stated that the Malmö event "haunted us and was a catastrophe in terms of planning" (Oskarsson, 2002).

The ability of both commanders and police personell outside the dialogue unit to regard police operations in a more long-term perspective and not merely focus on individual operations has developed dramatically since the implementation of the SPT concept.

When the dialogue police have reason to put forward a number of viewpoints, the points are now mostly widely understood. Be-

sides the fact that the dialogue police as a phenomenon have become widely accepted in the police organisation, it is also probably true that the dialogue police have developed an ability to put forward their viewpoints in a way that causes less irritation within the organisation than before.

Nevertheless, the negative attitudes towards the dialogue police that still exist in the organisation can be of critical importance for the continued existence and development of the dialogue police. When a major assessment was carried out in 2009, the following dialogue took place in front of all the commanders in an operation:

- ”- We think the dialogue police have too much power and control! (the intelligence service).*
- No, we put forward the point of view of the counterpart. We are a sounding board for the gold and silver commanders! (the dialogue police).*
- Ok, that’s as may be. I’ll put it another way! We think dialogue has gained too much influence! (the intelligence service)”<sup>17</sup>*

Apart from a dialogue police officer who expressed himself in the above terms, the criticism was not contradicted by anyone else. This fact, in combination with what was said, indicates that the work of the dialogue police has not been fully established in the organisation and its importance is still not seen as self-evident. In some parts of the organisation, dialogue seems to be perceived as a competitor. The personnel in the dialogue unit whom I interviewed stated that that even if some police officers find it difficult to understand that dialogue as have a higher value – that of helping safeguard freedom of expression – they should at least be able to see dialogue as part of a tactical solution. However, the feeling

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<sup>17</sup> The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

among the dialogue police is that some colleagues believe that dialogue police work is an end in itself:

*“Some people appear to believe that we just go out and talk and have no actual purpose. Also, the dialogue police are so stupid that they make friends with the demonstrators. When the purpose of the dialogue concept is not understood, it is easy to perceive individual dialogue police officers as naive and, at worst, make an association with the Stockholm syndrome. However, things are now a great deal more positive in the organisation. Before, you were normally greeted with scepticism, nowadays this only occurs in exceptional cases. However, those exceptions can still have serious consequences for the concept if they become accepted. It is easy to blame any failure on the dialogue police, whether they were at fault or not. The dialogue police have made mistakes in the past and will make mistakes in the future, just like everyone else in an operation.”<sup>18</sup>*

One reason for the difficulty to gain acceptance in some situations may be that some police officers feel useless if they have not acted with force during an operation:

*“We understand that it can be frustrating to sit on a bus for eight hours with not very much going on and suddenly when you see an offence, to have the commander tell you that you mustn’t intervene. The dialogue police have historically advocated taking into consideration the risk that an intervention may bring about an escalation of a situation. Nowadays the dialogue police almost never need to point this out as it is usually considered when commanders carry out tactical assessments. This is a nice situation to be in, but there are still senior officers who always believe that we are behind those assessments”<sup>19</sup>*

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18 Interview with a dialogue police officer.

19 Interview with a dialogue police officer.

## 7.1 Influencing police actions

**INFLUENCING THE POLICE ORGANISATION** to act in a certain way can reduce the risk of police actions being perceived as provoking or chaotic. The dialogue police gain extremely good insight into different groups and the prevailing values in those groups. This means that the dialogue police are in a good position to understand what effect police actions can have on these groups both in the long and the short term.

Even though factors involving a long-term escalation are now taken into account in decisions to a greater extent than previously, there is still a need for the dialogue police to emphasise external perspectives. One example of this is given below, where a planned statement was corrected somewhat after the dialogue police had put forward arguments to the commander that the intended mode of expression was inappropriate:

*“The police authority rejected an application for a permit to hold a demonstration in a particular place. The intention of the police was to keep different groups separated geographically from each other. The reason given by the authority was that the interest group submitting the application had previously been involved in disturbances at demonstrations. The interest group consisted of a number of different groups. However, the refusal, which according to the dialogue police was relevant in itself, was phrased by the authority in a manner which was opposed by the dialogue police. Firstly, it tarred all the groups in the interest group with the same brush. Previous negative behaviour associated with a specific group was thus attributed to all the groups.*

*The dialogue police saw a danger in equating non-parliamentary groups with parliamentary groups. There had never previously been a problem with some of the groups. The*

*dialogue police therefore considered that the authority was exposing itself to an unnecessary debate in media. Secondly, an individual was indirectly identified on weak grounds as a perpetrator of violence. The authority had to some extent considered using this as grounds for the refusal. The individual has a central role in a parliamentary organisation and had shown willingness prior to previous demonstrations to try to avoid confrontations. To highlight this individual was to risk making the grounds for the authority's refusal even easier to criticise. The authority would at the same time appear ignorant if the real circumstances were exposed in the media. It also meant that a more or less public person was wrongly shown in a bad light. Besides the reasons described, it also risked dealing out blows to future willingness to establish dialogue if it was shown that a willingness to enter into dialogue did not pay off.*

*The dialogue police's misgivings that a parliamentary group had been wrongly identified as perpetrators of violence would be exposed in media were confirmed. The authority thereby became involved in an unnecessary conflict and lost credibility in some circles. However, the damage was limited since the authority took some of the dialogue police's views into account. The authority chose, among other things, not to highlight the individual in question.”<sup>20</sup>*

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20 The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved. There are some differences of opinion among the involved dialogue police officers concerning individual activities in this example. Nevertheless, this does not affect the overall picture or the main aim of the descriptions, which is to provide examples of different duties included in dialogue police activities.

## 7.2 Teamwork with other police officers

**WHEN THERE IS A PRESSING** need to carry out an intervention, it places great demands on the police officers who are to carry it out. They aim, among other things, to find a suitable moment to remove certain persons so that other demonstrators do not become agitated.

If the police choose to remove key persons who are able to influence the crowd, it may be more difficult to minimise the scope of a confrontation. During the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001 extensive material damage was caused on June 15 and a considerable number of police officers and demonstrators were injured. The activist groups *Globalisering underifrån* (Globalization from below) and *AFA* (Antifascist Action) had no functioning organisation. Forces within these organisations which could have calmed the activists and possibly prevented Friday's violence were therefore lost (Peterson & Oskarsson, 2002).

The police offer of dialogue in combination with an ability to carry out precise, well-planned interventions in crowds is important. Peterson & Oskarsson (2002) state that the ability of the police to implement selected measures is the key to safeguard citizens' rights in protest actions. How police intervention affects a crowd, in both the short and the long term, must be weighed against the possible positive effects of an intervention.

Better internal dialogue between the dialogue police and other police officers, in combination with greater understanding of the SPT concept (both among dialogue police and commanders within the SPT concept) has enabled confrontations to be avoided. One example of this:

*“The police, including the dialogue police, had estimated that around thirty people would turn up to a manifestation. That estimate was based on previous experience of similar manifestations in that place.*

*Around two hundred people turned. Since the police were not present in sufficient numbers to enable SPT tactics to be used, it became a question of self-defence in the event of a confrontation between the police and the demonstrators. If a confrontation had occurred there was a risk it would have resulted in extensive injuries to both police personnel and demonstrators.*

*In similar earlier manifestations, the group had shouted a great deal and expressed themselves in aggressive terms. However, this had not resulted in any confrontation with the police. The dialogue police considered that on this occasion some individuals within the group were seeking a confrontation with the police. These persons were forced to create the impression within the group<sup>21</sup> that the police were the attackers in order bring the other demonstrators along. This problem was discussed with the tactical commander.*

*Later, the police personnel were exposed to extensive provocations, but were not attacked. Inappropriate behaviour by a single police officer could have jeopardised the entire operation. The dialogue police were extremely impressed with the actions of the uniformed police officers. They managed, despite being under a great deal of mental strain, to carry out the plan devised by the tactical commander.*

*A bag containing an object which could have been intended to be thrown at the police was observed. Carrying out an intervention and taking the bag by force may have worked, but would have entailed considerable risk. Good coordination between a dialogue police officer and the operational com-*

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<sup>21</sup> Whether or not there was a deliberate attempt among these individuals is irrelevant in this context because the police still focus on their own performance and the impact they can have on the crowd.

*mander resulted in an unspoken agreement with the demonstrators. The demonstrators abandoned the bag, which was left on the ground. The police then took the bag, but in return did not attempt to arrest the person who had been carrying it. The bag contained coloured dye which would probably have been thrown at the police.*

*The manifestation took place without any confrontation between the police and the demonstrators”.*<sup>22</sup>

Police officers in an operation can either make dialogue impossible or strengthen the willingness to establish it. In this context, information can be conveyed either verbally or non-verbally. One example which clearly illustrates how other police officers in an operation can strengthen the message of the dialogue police is given below:

*“A member of a group was prosecuted in a legal proceeding. Other members of the group wished to support their member by attending the proceedings. An opposing group also wanted to attend to support the plaintiff. As space in the court was extremely limited it was not possible for both groups to stay in the waiting room of the court.*

*The intention of the tactical commander was to ensure that the group wishing to support the plaintiff did not approach the building in which the proceedings were to be held. The dialogue police were given the task to establish a dialogue with this group.*

*The dialogue police officers suggested that the police perhaps could offer a location which was so satisfactory from the group’s point of view that they would come to the conclusion that it was worth opting for this location rather than*

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<sup>22</sup> This example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved.

*having a confrontation with the police. The tactical commander could consider this solution.*

*However, the group had such a negative attitude towards the police that it was not possible to make contact with them in this situation. The dialogue police therefore had to negotiate as good a location as possible from the group's point of view.*

*After some discussion, the tactical commander was prepared to allow them to stand beside one of the entrances to the district court where the plaintiff was to arrive by car. This allowed the plaintiff to feel well supported while at the same time keeping the group at a safe distance from the other group.*

*The location was probably better for the other party than it would have been if the commander had negotiated directly with the group. The dialogue police find it easier to put forward arguments which are understandable and acceptable from the point of view of police tactics. The commander can also put forward tactical ideas and point out tactical problems when the arguments are discussed. The dialogue police officers' knowledge of police tactics also places them in a good position to propose alternative solutions.*

*Contact with the group was required in order to give the dialogue police a chance to put forward the proposal. Plainclothes arrest officers established the whereabouts of the group. When the dialogue police officers had found them, it transpired that the people who appeared to be the leaders of the group had no interest what so ever in talking to the police. Nevertheless, the proposal was put forward. The dialogue police officers told them that tactical commander had offered them a location which could be satisfactory from the group's*

*point of view. The dialogue police officers spoke to them, but they just turned their back on the dialogue police. However, they had heard the offer.*

*As usual, the group was not homogenous. It consisted of some members who had a less aggressive attitude towards the police. The dialogue officers considered that even though the offer had been put forward, there was a risk that it would not be conveyed to the group or that it would be misrepresented in such a way as to seem like an idiotic suggestion. For that reason, the proposal was put forward to a number of individuals surrounding the hard core. A number of individuals in the group appeared to think that it was a good suggestion. However, the people who advocated a harder line against the police seemed to be the ones with most influence over the group.*

*The tactical commander had told the dialogue police officers that if the group rejected the offer of a location they would not be allowed to approach the district court. This message was given to the group. It was important for the police to get their way, otherwise it would be difficult to gain credibility in any arguments put forward in future negotiations. The police personnel released the information. In this way, the tactical commander, plain clothes officers and uniformed SPT group members made a considerable contribution to the development of dialogue activities.*

*There is likely to be less risk of a crowd becoming violent if the police put forward a proposal which demonstrates a will on the part of the police to reach an acceptable solution from the group's point of view (regardless of whether or not there are individuals with a confrontational agenda).*

*When body searches were made in the group during the*

*operation, the police personnel stated several times that it was the group itself which had chosen this solution. The approach adopted by the police was therefore comprehensible to the members of the group. The police had made an offer which had been rejected. The police had also stated that the group would be halted and that they would not be permitted to approach the district court. The police's initial message was thereby strengthened and the hard core probably found it more difficult to maintain that their solution was effective when a less confrontational attitude would probably have been more beneficial for the group".<sup>23</sup>*

The approach adopted by the police can lead to an internal debate in groups:

*"After an occupation of a party information booth (see the example given in section 5.1.2.) a debate takes place on an internet forum. A few activists question the agreement with the police. However, they were met by widespread opposition. The people who answered the criticism asked how the people who were questioning the agreement actually thought - if the event could be carried out in a "very good" way, then what was wrong with that. The people responding to the internal criticism found it strange that the others agreed with the police - to lower the volume of the music to allow the pro-feminist meeting to take place, could be questioned at all. "It's a good thing to get the feminist message across!"*

*Because the event could take place in a way that the majority of the activists were happy with, the radical individuals who advocated confrontational solutions were polarised."<sup>24</sup>*

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23 This example is based on my own observations in my role as a dialogue police officer.

24 The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

If individuals who are inclined towards violence in a group are unsuccessful in getting their way in comparison with people who are able to accept dialogue with the police, it is possible to influence groups which are less inclined to choose violent methods to get their message across.

Research indicates that people in the crowd who do not start out with any unlawful or hostile intentions are likely to react positively to police efforts to make friendly advances and therefore will distance themselves from the hostile groups. Even if dialogue does not necessarily prevent violence in crowds, it can have a decisive effect on relationships between different groups in the crowd. Dialogue can therefore have an effect on whether a conflict is minor and remains isolated or whether it escalates to a general confrontation with the crowd (Reicher et al, 2004).

If, for example, an organiser or participant has unsuccessfully attempted to deal with isolated individuals or a group behaving in an inappropriate manner in a crowd, police intervention may even be seen as positive (see also Waddington, 1994).

Understanding can lead to greater acceptance of police actions both among those against whom the intervention is carried out and those who witness it. This is important for whether individuals in a crowd side with and ally themselves to the people against whom the police action is carried out. Dialogue which leads to understanding the reason for an intervention before the intervention is carried out and dialogue which explains an intervention afterwards can therefore play a decisive part in whether a course of events escalates or not.

It is important for the other SPT personnel to feel that they are part of the process whereby an agreement is made. This can lead to greater willingness to act in such a way as to make agreements between the police and different groups possible. It is also important to avoid the perception that a tactical solution equals unsuccessful dialogue. As described above, dialogue can, for exam-

ple, lead to less extensive confrontation than would have been the case without dialogue. As far as negotiations in crisis situations are concerned, it is pointed out that a tactical solution does not mean that the negotiations were meaningless (see FBI, 1995; McMains & Mullins, 1996).

It has taken some police officers outside the dialogue unit longer than necessary to understand the activities of the dialogue police. Also, not every police officer in the SPT organisation have either accepted or understood the work of the dialogue police. One explanation for this is that the connection between certain measures adopted and events occurring was clearly understood by personnel in the dialogue unit, but not by personnel outside the unit. It has been shown that assessments and behaviour by the dialogue police which were questioned by other personnel have become comprehensible only when they have been explained. These explanations have not been assimilated by the other personnel to a sufficient extent as the involved police officers did not clearly understand that the entire operation was affected because they acted in a certain way.

### **7.3 Dialogue with a range of interest groups**

**ESTABLISHING DIALOGUE** with a range of interest groups in combination with a strategic approach makes it possible to influence an event. It may be a question of influencing participants in public events to follow fundamental democratic principles and act in accordance with them or influencing them to act in such a way as to reduce the risk for confrontations.

Researchers use the concept “die in the ditches” to refer to the fact that the police may sometimes find themselves in situations where they are forced into confrontations. These “ditches” are often not dug by the police themselves, but by others. Normally, the “ditches” are clearly marked in the political sphere, but can suddenly be created by other forces. The police are in an exposed position and risk being criticised if disorder breaks out in these cas-

es. If the police play a waiting game they can be criticised for being too passive. If, on the other hand, they intervene at an early stage they risk criticism for overreacting (Waddington, 2003).

The dialogue police can help to fill in those “ditches” (see the example in section 8.3, the ethical dilemma). It has also been possible for the dialogue police to establish dialogue with different interest groups to completely remove the risk of a confrontation. One example of this:

*“An act of violence resulted in a demonstration held by a group. This resulted in confrontations between groups.*

*A similar demonstration was planned.*

*The dialogue police made contact with relatives to the people who had suffered the acts of violence. Several meetings were held with the family and the situation was discussed. The relatives’ opinion became crystallised after this dialogue. They were opposed to any further demonstrations being held.*

*The dialogue police contacted politicians in the municipality in question and informed them that there was a possibility that the demonstration might not take place if the municipal authority arranged a meeting between the family which had suffered the violence and the people intending to organise the demonstration. The dialogue police stated that it was desirable that the municipal authority should seek a cross-party solution in this case. The dialogue police’s assessment was that the solution could otherwise be used in a party political way, which risked reducing the chances of achieving a desirable result.*

*Politicians from the governing party and opposition politicians took part in a meeting between the family who had suf-*

*ferred the violence and the organisers of the demonstration.*

*The group which had intended to arrange the manifestation took into account the family's wishes and showed their respect for the family. They therefore called off the planned demonstration.”<sup>25</sup>*

Situations such as the one described require the existence of specially designated dialogue police who are able to focus on a matter for a longer period and who are able to build up trust with different interest groups. Wahlström & Oskarsson (2006) emphasise the importance of trust for the ability to reach agreements (see also Hedquist, 2002).

Some groups have no interest in establishing dialogue with the police. They also often attempt to influence others to act in the same way. Because the dialogue police are able to devote themselves to establish solid, long-term contacts with individuals who have peripheral dealings with groups which advocate establishing a distance from the police, there is a possibility that more hard-line individuals may also be influenced in the long run. One example of when hard-line groups were influenced to take a softer line:

*“In recent times, the antifascist movement in Stockholm has been dominated by AFA, which has adopted a confrontational, undemocratic approach. Many people on the non-parliamentary left wing have criticised AFA for being an elitist, exclusive movement. The critics state that there is nothing wrong with knocking over a couple of Nazis here and there, but that does not help the struggle in the long term. For that reason a number of organisations have broken with the NMR<sup>26</sup> and have instead formed Koalition (The Coalition)*

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25 The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

26 *Nätverket Mot Rasism* [Network Against Racism]. The AFA is one of the groups included in this network.

*in order to resume the struggle against fascism and convert it into an issue for society in general. Because of this, NMR itself has become a more homogenous organisation in ideological terms but at the same time appears to have taken on board the criticism. This year they applied for a permit and established dialogue with the police.”<sup>27</sup>*

In order to establish solid, long-term contacts, the dialogue police need to take part in a number of different kinds of events. It has proved to be important to attend smaller events which are calm and peaceful. These events provide good opportunities for establishing dialogue with interested parties and relationships which may be of great importance in other contexts.

At first, the dialogue police were only used in manifestations where it was feared that there was a considerable risk of confrontation between different groups and where there were actually few opportunities for establishing dialogue. However there is now a greater understanding that the work of the dialogue police is part of a long-term process.

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<sup>27</sup> Document from a dialogue police officer prior to a large demonstration.

## 8. Discussion

This chapter will illustrate a number of issues which are important in order for the dialogue concept to function and develop.

### 8.1 Duty to report

**THE DUTY TO REPORT** incumbent for the Swedish police naturally also applies to dialogue police officers. No authority is able to establish a waiver of this duty, for example by issuing a regulation. However, a repressive role in this regard would in many respects make dialogue impossible. For example, establishing dialogue with the person responsible for an unauthorised demonstration is difficult if anyone who makes himself known then is made subject to legal proceedings. In the same way, dialogue police officers would experience problems to carry out their main duties if they were forced to intervene against different offences during a demonstration. It is possible to refer to the principles of need and proportionality to explain why dialogue police officers do not intervene, but the obligation to report is problematic in general.

The dialogue police have not so far focused on intervening and becoming involved in activities to prosecute crimes. The dialogue officers have therefore mainly been perceived as communicators and not as “combatants”. This focus has facilitated communication between the police command and a range of interested groups and has enabled confrontations to be minimised and occasionally avoided altogether. The role of the dialogue police as a “non-combatant” is important. However, the police authority faces a dilemma. The current approach adopted by the dialogue police is important in order to minimise the extent of damage to property and injury to persons. However, the police organisation cannot at the same time refrain from emphasising the duty to report incumbent on all police officers because that duty is governed by law (section 9 of the Police Act, SFS [*Svensk förfat-*

*tingssamling* - Swedish Code of Statutes] 1984:387). During the seven years in which the dialogue unit has existed in Stockholm, no one has ever been convicted of an offence at a demonstration through testimony given by a dialogue police officer.

## 8.2 Mediator role

**IT IS NATURAL THAT THE ORGANISATIONAL** affiliation of the dialogue police can be a problem for their credibility with parties opposing to the police in negotiations. Credibility requires integrity on the part of dialogue police officers. It is important that they are not be perceived as an unit within the police which has been set up mainly to deceive an opposing party. This is of fundamental importance for the existence of the dialogue police function.

The role of the dialogue police is as a kind of mediator between the police organisation and a counterpart, despite the fact that the dialogue police are part of the police organisation:

*“People think that the dialogue police plead the demonstrators’ cause to the other police officers. There may be negotiations in many parts in which modern demonstrators negotiate with post-modern activists who in turn negotiate with the dialogue police who in turn negotiate with the other police officers” (Hyllander, 2005).*

The dialogue police risk being met with mistrust both within the police organisation and by an opposing party. On several occasions the dialogue police have been accused within the police organisation of siding with a particular group against the police. Nevertheless, acceptance of the dialogue police has grown. There is now greater internal understanding of the arguments put forward by the dialogue police.

There is a risk that greater efforts by the dialogue police to conform to the police organisation will result in the dialogue police losing credibility or experiencing difficulties in building up credibility with certain external groups or even finding it impossible to do so. Building up a certain degree of credibility in some groups takes a long time, whereas credibility can be destroyed extremely quickly. See, for example, the effect of the intervention against the Hvitfeldska secondary school during the EU-summit in Gothenburg (Löfgren & Vatankhah, 2002). This is an example of how extremely difficult it can be for the dialogue police to win back trust once it has been lost. A short-term gain for the police organisation can therefore come at an extremely high price and in the long run entails a risk of completely destroying the role of the dialogue police as possible discussion partners in some contexts.

The methods of the dialogue police, which have included open criticism in media of police decisions and the use of force during an operation, have helped the dialogue police to be perceived as more trustworthy and not “puppets” of the police command. At the same time, this open criticism has caused other problems for the dialogue police linked to the fact that they are part of a hierarchical structure.

It is important for the dialogue police to show a genuine interest in establishing dialogue and it is also important that there should be real possibilities to reach solutions which are acceptable from both parties’ points of view, i.e. a willingness by both parties to be accommodating.

Agreements with the police are also constantly at risk of being discarded whenever the police consider themselves to be forced to make use of their preferential right of interpretation, as enshrined in law, or when other parties push into a space where an agreement is considered to apply. The main duty of the police service is to maintain public order and security. This task includes maintaining the status quo and the prevailing social order. This therefore means that the police help to maintain existing hierar-

chies and inequalities in society. The State and the police in particular, are a guarantee of social order while they at the same time are the most powerful threat to individual freedoms and rights (Oskarsson, 2001; see also Waddington 1999).

In the USA, which has a long tradition of making use of negotiating strategies during protests, negotiators at first were selected by the White House. Nowadays, negotiators are service officers at the National Park Service, the Metropolitan Police Department and/or the U.S. Capitol Police (McPhail et al, 1998). In the light of the above, it is possible to question whether the dialogue police's function is made impossible by an organisational position within the police. Belonging to an organisation in this way makes the work more difficult in relation to some external contacts and standpoints. Nevertheless, there are arguments in favour of this function being a part of the police organisation.

One of the most persuasive reasons has to do with the fact that effective dialogue activities require good knowledge of the current situation during events. The dialogue police need to be in a good position to be able to influence the police organisation to act in a certain way in these situations, which are often time-critical. Their work also requires legal and tactical skills. Another important argument in is that there are more opportunities to bring about understanding and acceptance of police methods. The work of the dialogue police can make it clear that the police are attempting to avoid the use of force. It is therefore a greater chance that an intervention by the police will not be perceived as provoking. Probably it is most advantageous if the function of the dialogue police is included in the police organisation, although belonging to the police organisation gives rise to a series of disadvantages, as described above.

In this context, the dialogue police must be permitted a relatively independent role in relation to the local police organisation. In order to safeguard the integrity of the dialogue police in relation

to certain operational decisions, it would probably therefore be an advantage if the group were positioned in such a way as to minimise problems associated with the hierarchical structure within the police. There is also a need for consensus and an overall strategy for how events taking place in different places around the country are to be dealt with. At present it does not appear that all dialogue units in Sweden have adopted the same approach. The current organisational position of the dialogue units has occasionally caused problems.

### 8.3 Ethical dilemma

**ONE DILEMMA**, which to some extent is linked to the above problems, is that the dialogue unit is sometimes faced with ethical considerations concerning how to act in response to orders issued. One example of this:

*“The police authority preferred not to permit a manifestation in a municipality, but found that it was impossible to refuse the application in question. The municipal authority was not happy that the police had granted approval. The municipal authority expressed its disapproval publicly and was not interested in becoming involved in any attempt to minimise the problems associated with the manifestation. The dialogue police considered that the municipal authority’s attitude gave rise to two main problems. On the one hand, it was a simple matter to blame the police if any confrontation took place and the police would thereby be seen in a bad light. On the other hand, there was a greater risk of personal injury and damage to property. It was considered that there was a clear risk of this unless a number of resources in the municipality were mobilised.*

*The dialogue police made contact with the official respon-*

*sible in the municipal authority. This person expressed his views in an emphatic manner. The chief of the police authority also had contact with this person and on that occasion too he had dismissed all initiatives on the part of the police to bring about municipal coordination.*

*In order to change this attitude, the police found that there was a need to motivate the municipal authority to cooperate by assigning part of the responsibility to the municipal authority. The dialogue police began to formulate a statement making it clear that if there were any disturbance at the manifestation, the municipal authority would be partly responsible because they had not been willing to cooperate with police efforts to minimise the scale of the problem. The person responsible at the municipal authority was informed of the contents of the prepared press release.*

*The official responsible at the municipal authority had good contacts high up in the political system. A dialogue officer was telephoned by a senior officer at police headquarters. Even though it was not expressed in so many words, the spirit of the conversation was that the dialogue police should 'stop putting pressure on the person in question'.*

*A similar order was also given somewhat later by the strategic commander – when it also emerged that he had received an order which led to a change in the original order.*

*This placed the dialogue police in a dilemma. Because the dialogue police are part of a hierarchical organisation, the dialogue police must obey given orders. At the same time, there was a markedly greater risk that people would be injured if this order were obeyed. The changed attitude of the commander had also arisen in an inappropriate manner through political involvement in an individual case.*

*The two dialogue police officers involved in the work decided that they would continue to act in this matter. It was naturally impossible to induce the police authority to be a party to this action and no press release was therefore sent out about the municipal authority's unwillingness to cooperate to reduce the risk of confrontations.*

*Contact was made with the press secretary in the municipal authority and she was asked how the other political parties viewed the municipal authority's action. According to her no political party was interested in cooperating. The dialogue police then requested telephone numbers for all the leaders of the various local political parties. The press secretary then asked the dialogue police officer to wait half an hour since she had to confer with the person responsible in the municipal authority.*

*After half an hour, the press secretary returned with the information that the person responsible in the municipality had not changed his opinion. The municipal authority would not cooperate.*

*Because the matter was urgent, one dialogue police officer spent the evening telephoning the leaders of the local political parties. It was possible to contact most of the local leaders and discussions with them revealed that they were willing to cooperate themselves during the operation.*

*Because the other parties intended to cooperate with the operation, there was greater motivation for the ruling party in the municipal authority to also take part. It was decided that the municipal authority would cooperate in attempting to minimise the risk of confrontation during the demonstration.*

*The municipal authority made premises and personnel available. A total of a hundred people, besides police personnel, took part in activities to attempt to minimise violent expressions during the manifestation. These persons included nightwalkers, youth recreation centre personnel and field assistants and a bishop from a local church. Politicians also took part in this activity.*

*Without this cooperation by the municipal authority and other persons, there could have been relative extensive injury to persons and damage to property. There were a number of young people in the area who wished to take action against the manifestation, but it was possible to calm them down. Politicians whom the dialogue police met during the manifestation and other participants stated their opinion that the event had been handled in a professional manner. The police organisation was also satisfied with the outcome.*

*Since this event, cooperation with the municipal authority has worked well. Similar circumstances have occurred in another municipality. There it was possible to achieve consensus between the municipality and the police. There is also a contrary example, in which the dialogue police were unsuccessful in their attempts to establish consensus between the municipal authority and the police. This proved to be disadvantageous both for the municipal authority and the police”.*<sup>28</sup>

## **8.4 Mandate**

**THE DIALOGUE POLICE’S WORKING CIRCUMSTANCES** in fast-changing situations during demonstrations have many similarities with police

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<sup>28</sup> This example is based on information from the dialogue police officers involved and my own observations in my role as a dialogue officer.

negotiations in crisis situations. Due to lack of knowledge on the part of both the dialogue police (this knowledge has diminished among the dialogue police as negotiators have been replaced by other personnel. However, some individuals have a natural aptitude for acting in accordance with the negotiation concept) and commanders of the fundamental approach that should be applied during negotiations (see, for example, FBI, 1995; McMains & Mullins, 1996), opportunities cannot be taken advantage of to the extent that they should be.

One important factor is that if the dialogue police's space for negotiation becomes so restricted that it is not possible for the opposing party to trust the willingness of the police to establish a negotiated solution (Hedquist, 2002), there is a minimal chance for the negotiations to be successful.

The dialogue police need sufficient mandate to be able to discuss a range of solutions with different groups. Hörnqvist (2002) points out that when the contact group (which was responsible for the police dialogue activities during the EU summit) lacked a proper mandate, it was perceived that there was no point in establishing a dialogue with them. In order to take advantage of a situation which has arisen, the dialogue police must be able to make certain preliminary agreements directly with a counterpart without having to confer with a commander all the time. The dialogue police naturally lose ground if it then transpires that these preliminary agreements cannot be kept to. Naturally, there are sometimes good reasons for changing preliminary agreements, but it is unfortunate if these decisions are made by commanders with little insight into or little willingness to comply with the police organisation's long-term strategy.

One example of how the dialogue concept lost ground through a decision at a low hierarchical level:

*“A demonstration is taking place calmly. The people responsible for the demonstration stated a wish to be allowed to*

*stop in another place (which in itself does not appear to be a particular problem from the point of view of police tactics, but which differs slightly from the original plan for where the demonstrators would stop.). A short dialogue took place.*

*In order to motivate the group in pedagogical terms to behave in a similar way in future demonstrations, the dialogue police attempted to take advantage of the opportunity which suddenly arises. The dialogue police replied that the decision must be made by the operational commander, but because the demonstration was unfolding in a satisfactory manner, it was naturally considered to be a good opportunity to reach different agreements.*

*When the dialogue police conferred with the responsible commander the request was refused.*

*This decision was unfortunate because the police thereby failed to take advantage of an opportunity to show that it pays to act calmly and attempt to establish dialogue with the police. The decision also gave the organisers a reason to question the benefits of talking to the dialogue police.”<sup>29</sup>*

Even though the above problem seldom occurs, a discussion is needed about how such a situation can be dealt with. One closely related problem is when an intervention decided by a commander is considered to have serious consequences for future demonstrations and for the long-term work of minimising injury to persons and damage to property. It can be seen as a situation whereby a single commander, by making a decision, is actually making a decision that should be made at a high hierarchical level within the police.

One possible solution in these exceptional circumstances would

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<sup>29</sup> The example is based on information reported by a dialogue police officer involved.

be to agree to raise the question to a higher level in the organisation. These procedures need to be well established and function in a well-practiced manner since they relate to time-critical decisions.

## 8.5 Intelligence

**THE FACT THAT INFORMATION** from the dialogue police is in great demand may be due to the fact that the criminal intelligence service cannot successfully obtain and supply all the information demanded by the police organisation. It could be said that the dialogue police have been given the task to bridge a gap in the sphere of criminal intelligence<sup>30</sup>. Since the organisation is highly appreciative of information from the dialogue police, it can naturally be satisfying for the dialogue unit and for the officers in the unit to prioritise their role as information gatherers over other tasks. The fact that the duties of the dialogue police have not been firmly laid down lead to a considerable risk of individual interpretations of those duties.

It is natural for the dialogue police to build up contacts in their work and gain access to a great deal of information through this. Nevertheless, demands from commanders can make dialogue officers feel pressured for short term purposes to take advantage of the contacts they have built up. Gaining access to certain information entails a risk that this will be prioritised over handling contacts in a more long term dialogue perspective. Because there is no clear boundary between intelligence and information gathering, combined with the fact that the organisation demands a great deal of information from the dialogue police, it is easy for duties to be shifted towards something that could be regarded as more or less pure criminal intelligence.

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30 This report should not be seen in any way as an assessment of the criminal intelligence service and neither should it be interpreted as meaning that the dialogue police always produce accurate information.

Training material for the mobile concept clearly states, as mentioned above, that the aim of the dialogue police not is to gather intelligence (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005). Dialogue is based on the ability to build up trust. This means that it is important to separate the work of the dialogue police from intelligence work (see Oskarsson, 2002) and from investigation work (see Hörnqvist, 2002). If the dialogue police are careful not to devote themselves to intelligence duties, trust can be built up:

*“The dialogue was described differently after the demonstrations. Before the demonstrations there was a certain amount of scepticism and mistrust of the dialogue police officers. The organisers thought that the police were there to snoop around and find out names.” (Hyllander, 2005)*

If dialogue police officers instead choose to act in a different way from what is described above, there is a risk that trust will fall so low that it will be impossible to carry on any dialogue police work in the slightly longer term. If they are to maintain and develop the ability to present usable information to commanders in the longer term, it is of fundamental importance that the dialogue police are given and take the opportunity to deal with contacts in such a way as to build up long term confidence.

## **8.6 Group mentality**

**IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT**, particularly in hierarchical organisations, there can be a lack of acceptance of questioning decisions. This may have serious and even catastrophic consequences (Bernstein et al, 1994; Myers, 2007). It is possible to minimise that risk by allowing misgivings to be expressed and proposals to be examined from a critical standpoint (Stensaasen & Sletta, 2000). The importance of accepting that one may be questioned also applies to reviews of police actions.

In several situations, dialogue police officers have taken on the task to subsequently question decisions, plans and police actions. This self-appointed role has given rise to problems and has frequently caused irritation among commanders – a natural enough reaction since it is also possible to question the fact that the dialogue police have taken on this task without having been allocated it. At the same time, it is possible to argue that because an authority applies a tactic to achieve a task<sup>31</sup>, the dialogue police's duties implicitly include expressing viewpoints on plans and instigating discussion on the consequences that a method may have or has had. The fact that the dialogue police take on that role can help to bring about a varied presentation of a situation when the police express themselves in the media. It is possible to prevent actions entailing considerable risk of creating negative stereotypes and chaos which may already be perceived as provoking at the planning stage (see also Granström, 2002).

One example of when viewpoints put forward internally by the dialogue police have been criticised:

*“During dialogue work prior to a large-scale demonstration, there were unfavourable comments on the impact of a statement that an official in the authority had made in media. The dialogue police reported how the information had been interpreted in the circles at which the article was aimed and stressed the importance of trying to avoid certain expressions – although there was no need to cancel the message because of that.*

*That report on how the information would be interpreted from the point of view of a counterpart annoyed the responsible senior officer. It was not considered the job of the dialogue police to express viewpoints on how work was carried out at superior hierarchical levels.*

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31 Assignment tactic means that it is not stated in detail how a duty should be carried out, but rather that it is up to the senior officer who has been given the task of resolving matters to the best of his ability within specific fundamental frameworks.

*However, it was not the dialogue police officers' intention to criticise at all, but to bring about a "win/win" situation for both the police authority and the opposing party to influence the authority to use the experience gained in future statements to media.*"<sup>32</sup>

It is important to emphasise that the examples given in this report, with the accompanying analyses, must not be interpreted to mean that the dialogue police officers think that their assessment always is correct. It should also be pointed out that changes have been made to some of the circumstances emphasised in the report.

In order for the dialogue police to be accepted within the organisation it is naturally an advantage if their role does not involve questioning and scrutinising plans from a critical standpoint. Neither is there anything to say that the dialogue police must take on that task. Nevertheless, successfully occupying the role of emphasising and reflecting on the possible impact of a particular decision requires, among other things, extremely good insight into different external perspectives and values, knowledge of previous actions by the opposing party and often also knowledge of certain people, their contact networks and their relationships with other people.

In the past few years, the dialogue police have participated to a much greater extent in discussions and decisions prior to and during operations. This is positive from a dialogue perspective. The representative of the dialogue police is no longer a strange bird who turns up at meetings but has instead become part of the system, with everything that entails. Of course, this new role can mean that greater efforts are made to conform in relation to commanders in the police organisation.

There is no problem as long as arguments are referred to commanders so that important viewpoints can be taken into consider-

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<sup>32</sup> The example is based on information reported by dialogue police officers involved.

ation when decisions are made, there is no problem.

In some cases there have been lively discussions concerning decisions, though these discussions have mainly taken place within the dialogue unit. There is an advantage in this, in that the feedback is easier for the people at whom the criticism is aimed to accept. At the same time, there is a risk that the wish to adapt the information means that important aspects are not sufficiently highlighted. This is a dilemma which gives cause for reflection.

## **8.7 SPT concept**

**IN RECENT TIMES**, the dialogue police have opposed circumstances within the SPT concept less often because that concept has been subject to developments (developments which has also included the activities of the dialogue police). Several examples of those changes are discussed in the report.

Nevertheless, there are certain issues which are still discussed among dialogue police officers after operations because they are of clear importance for dialogue police activities and, in the long run, for the ability of the SPT concept to function and develop.

### **8.7.1 Media strategy**

**THE MITIGATING PROCESS** benefits if an event is subject to a varied presentation (Granström, 2002). How the police express themselves in media is important in this respect.

Much would be gained if a media strategy was drawn up to support the authority's other efforts to prevent confrontation during operations. At present there exists a mixture of excellent statements and less successful statements from a mitigating point of view.

National news media often do not issue reports if disturbances are anticipated. Over the past few decades, groups have gained greater understanding of the importance of media reports with regard to getting their messages across. An emphasis on counter-demonstrations has therefore begun to play a prominent part in various movements' tactical measures. Confrontations attract attention (Parsmo, 2002; see also Peterson, 2001). There are reasons for asking how groups can get their message across without resorting to violence or seeking confrontation. Researchers have pointed out that the police could assume an active role and contact journalists and organise press conferences in order to minimise riots and disturbances (della Porta, 1998).

### **8.7.2 Logistics**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE EFFECTIVE** logistics for food and drink supply. Unless basic physiological needs for personnel are met it is difficult for them to act in a professional manner (see Maslow, 1958). It is easier for us to become irritated and aggressive when we not have had enough to eat and drink (some individuals are particularly sensitive in this regard).

One expression that is used among police personnel is "a well-fed police officer is a happy police officer". It is important for police officers to be able to communicate well. The SPT concept is founded on that. It goes without saying that eating and drinking is a prerequisite for satisfactory performance (see, for example, Fisher & Atkinson, 1980; Byström et al, 2002).

The point of investing resources in training personnel to act in accordance with the SPT concept can be questioned if it is not possible to apply the knowledge or if the knowledge is largely deficient. It should be pointed out that logistics during operations have improved, but no logistic organisation has been described for the mobile concept (Swedish National Police Academy, 2005). The need for a well-developed logistic organisation has for a long time been taken for granted in the Swedish armed forces.

It is naturally possible to argue that it is up to the personnel themselves to ensure that they receive food and drink, but the more critical a situation, the greater the risk that it will be difficult to find time for it. Well-developed logistics is important for bringing about the conditions in which dialogue can be established in order to avoid a situation escalating due to incorrect conduct on the part of an individual police officer.

### **8.7.3 Training – understanding**

**IT IS IMPORTANT FOR POLICE** personnel to have a good understanding and a high level of tolerance of different lifestyles in a community (see Waddington & Cricher, 2000). Knowledge of the causes of protest actions and the identity of the protesters can make the work of police personnel easier. Police officers can then be prepared for the kinds of participants that they will meet (see della Porta, 1998). It can also mean that police officers do not perceive participants' behaviour as unpredictable. If different types of behaviour are understood, it is not as easy for demonstrators' actions to be stereotyped by police officers as aggressive acts (see Waddington, 1994). This approach facilitates a mitigating process (see Granström, 2002).

If police personnel understand different groups' social identities and objectives they are more likely to understand which police actions can be perceived as provoking (Reicher et al, 2004).

As described above, the risk of violence may be minimised if police action is understood by both those subjected to it and those who witness interventions. Baron (1983) points out that establishing empathy for someone else can minimise the risk of aggressive behaviour. Understanding is an important factor in the ability to develop empathy. It is of decisive importance for the police to know how to explain an intervention or why a specific coercive measure is necessary (see also Holgersson, 2005; 2006a; 2007a;

2007b, where it states that knowledge is of decisive importance for the success of any police intervention).

Answering young people's questions as to why they must not do something in one way or another by simply saying that it is forbidden according to the Swedish law does not help bring about a constructive dialogue or to provide any explanation which may lead to understanding and acceptance. Explanations must include the reason why specific legislation exists.

The Gothenburg Committee's final report states that it would be valuable for the police to gain a deeper understanding of society outside their own organisation (SOU 2002:122). This can increase the chances of establishing dialogue. There are good reasons for revising current police training in this respect. This does not only apply to training linked to the SPT concept.

#### ***8.7.4 Handling individual police officers***

**RESEARCH HAS INDICATED** the importance of individual police officers' ability to deal with situations when they are working as part of a group. If an individual police officer acts out of character and allows him/herself to be provoked or takes things into his own hands (e.g. carries out an intervention against a demonstrator), it has consequences for the rest of the group, which then can be drawn into a confrontation with the demonstrators. If the police group is not able to deal with the situation which then arises, that will be noticed by other police groups, which will then be prepared to come to the rescue. By placing themselves side-by-side with their colleagues against the demonstrators, the police risk becoming a "mass", which is drawn into a war with the demonstrators, who are also a "mass". Even if, in pure organisational terms, they appear to be acting as a group, individuals' (police officers') actions are considered to be of decisive importance in determining what occurs. It is thus all a question of the inter-

play between individual police officers and individual demonstrators (Guvå, 2005).

One problem is that police organisations find it difficult to deal with criticism concerning individuals. How can the organisation, for example, deal with an officer who has a low stress threshold or who is not suited for certain types of work for other reasons? How is it possible to develop individuals' abilities in this respect? Baron (1983) points out that it is possible to control aggression through training and role-play (see also ART, Goldstein et al, 2000). Problems with police officers who do not feel that they have done anything useful if they have not used force during an operation are pedagogical rather than individual in nature. It is a question of explaining to them the importance of not making interventions at any price and that they can still feel satisfied even if they themselves have not taken any action.

There are SPT trained police officers who, for various reasons, do not appear suitable for the SPT concept. Because it is enough for one single individual police officer to fail to act in the desirable manner to jeopardise the outcome of an operation, is it crucial that these questions are discussed. Waddington (1998) states that the greatest threat for unwanted confrontations to occur are ill-considered interventions by an individual police officer. There are several examples around the world of when incorrect behaviour by individual police officers has contributed to large-scale disturbances.

Within polisorganisations it is generally difficult to deal with individuals who have been guilty of certain types of misconduct, something the police share with many other organisations (Holgersson, 2005; Holgersson et al, 2006b). There is a need to build up a systematic professional procedure for police officers and to develop further training (Holgersson, 2005). This naturally also applies to the SPT concept.

Some police officers are perceived to be less provoking and more sympathetic than others. Within the mobile operational concept,

for example, whenever the “wedge” tactical formation is used, there is a tendency to have big police officers at the point of the “wedge”. An argument could be made for using individuals with good communication skills and personal qualities who seldom are perceived as being provocative. People with these qualities could deliberately be used in this context in the same way as size and strength are emphasised as important qualities in other contexts. It is possible to argue that all police officers in the SPT concept should have good communication skills and should act in a way that is not perceived as provoking. However, it goes without saying that this ability varies between individuals in precisely the same way as physical stature.

Also, there are reasons to consider whether, at the point when personnel are selected for operations, it could be possible to carry out more operational assessments as to which police officers are chosen. Waddington (1994) emphasises that some command functions in police operations in London have been occupied by personnel who performed well during similar events. These matters are taken into consideration when commanders are selected for operations in Stockholm, but as far as the other personnel in the SPT organisation are concerned it appears that personnel are not selected on the basis of their individual abilities and previous performance. This could not only increase the chances of the police acting in a professional manner but could also constitute important feedback and serve as a stimulus to the personnel.

## **8.8 Democratic standpoints and opportunities**

**THE FOLLOWING POINTS** are so extensive and so complex that they cannot be discussed in detail in a short report. This report relates to the dialogue police function and there is therefore no space for a sufficiently detailed discussion which presents an accurate picture of the different standpoints and arguments in the following matters. I will nevertheless consider some of these matters because they are relevant to dialogue police activities.

### **8.8.1 “Crowd-control” versus the importance to safeguard demonstrations**

**DEALING WITH CROWDS** which have no political message, e.g. football hooligans, gives rise to fewer problems from a democratic point of view than when it is a question of different forms of manifestation of opinion. De Biasi (1998) emphasises that the importance of mediation, dialogue and negotiation has been underestimated as far as football hooliganism in Italy is concerned, where the presence of the extreme right in groups of ultras complicates the hooligan problem.

The democratic system as it is today, including things like the general right to vote, has its origins in different forms of political protest which forced a new order to come about. Civil disobedience plays an important part in the creation of society’s collective, political identity. It is a crucial element in social processes in which both the forms of democracy and the overall objectives of democratic society are defined (Thörn, 1999). Civil disobedience is founded on the notion that there is a higher right than the law, with a distinction being made between legality and legitimacy. The law and morality are seen as two conceptually separate systems of norms. The fact that a political decision is part of the legal system gives it legality. In order for it to be perceived as legitimate, it must also comply with fundamental moral principles (Hebert & Jacobsson, 1999; see also Habermas 1985; 1996).

Researchers point out that, paradoxically enough, a liberal democratic system requires individuals who question the system itself. However, these researchers are of the opinion that the political system instead appears to attempt to meet challenges from activists by seeking to institutionalise them. This enables those who challenge the system to be controlled more easily (Peterson, 2006).

Empirical studies have indicated that the way in which the police deal with protests not only serves as an indicator of the political government's willingness to listen to those who are attempting to make themselves heard, but also affects how protests are carried out (della Porta et al, 2006).

The police can contribute to this institutionalisation by always meeting certain groups with force while handling other groups with “kid gloves”, i.e. the police categorise groups into good groups and bad groups. Under such circumstances, the form of the protest is not decided by the challengers, but by the State itself (Peterson, 2006). The fact that police services attempt to steer protesters can mean that those protesters lose their “disturbing” influence on traditional politics. The ability of a mass protest to undermine is its primary political resource and without a “point”, a mass protest loses much of its purpose (Peterson, 2002). The more effective the police are in maintaining order, the less governing politicians and powerful interests in society are forced to take viewpoints from different groups into account. By using the police, those in power avoid engaging with the social and economic issues which caused the protests (Waddington, 1991).

The police's own perception of their role can be divided into two extremes: “Bürgerpolizei” (the police are there to act in citizens' best interests) and “Staatspolizei” (the police are there for the State). The first of these police philosophies is the fundamental notion that the police must facilitate democratic efforts towards change. In this case, communication becomes a central working method of the police. In the second philosophy it instead becomes important to protect the prevailing social order through various forms of repressive measures (Winter, 1998). It is very dangerous if the police become distanced from citizens in a society (Bessel, 2000; see also Waddington & Cricher, 2000).

The APEC<sup>33</sup> meeting held in Canada in 1997 is an example of the unfortunate consequences that political pressure on the police can have from a democratic point of view. Ironically enough, it transpired that the Canadian government was prepared to use undemocratic methods in order to stifle protests against undemocratic regimes. The police methods adopted gave rise to questions concerning how far the police were actually willing to go. Historical examples show that the police can fulfil the requirements placed on them by governors regardless of how far they conform to fundamental democratic rights (Ericson & Doyle, 1999).

The transfer of power has sometimes involved tougher methods and less tolerance for different forms of demonstrations. A comparative study carried out in Italy and Germany showed that police methods for dealing with protests were softer and more tolerant when a left-wing government was in power compared to when a conservative government was in power, when police methods tended to be more robust (della Porta, 1995).

The police in England also became involved in a greater number of confrontations when the Conservative party was in power. Mrs Thatcher's policies were carried through in an authoritative manner, with the importance of law and order being emphasised. This had an impact on the way in which the police dealt with protest actions. The police were criticised during this period for being "Maggie's private army" (Waddington, 1991; 1994; Waddington & Cricher, 2000). Researchers have pointed out that, due to the importance of the transfer of power for police methods, the police must not be used as though they were the private army of those who happen to be in power at any particular time (G. Marx, 1998).

There are researchers who state that the proposals put forward by the Gothenburg Committee are based on an unnuanced categorisation of demonstrators into one peaceful (modern) group and one hostile group of provocateurs. Despite the fact that the Commit-

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33 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation.

tee initially emphasises the political perspective, there is no more detailed discussion of those issues and the events in Gothenburg are treated as though they were police problems. The Committee therefore misses the point of how a new movement of politically motivated young people can be accommodated within the framework of democratic society. Instead of discussing how politicians can establish dialogue with political organisations and opinion groups, the Committee investigates methods for developing and strengthening the dialogue between the police and these groups (Guvå, 2005).

It is important to point out that the dialogue concept can not to be reduced to a police psycho-tactical crowd management method if it is to be developed further. If the concept as a whole is to work in relation to political disturbances in the long term, dialogue must be allowed to form part of a process of change, with other groups in society participating in the dialogue to facilitate change.

### **8.8.2 Greater focus on factual matters**

**THE DIALOGUE POLICE** can cooperate in ensuring that emphasis is placed on factual matters during demonstrations, but a successful outcome depends also on the rest of the police organisation and whether other public groups act in a desirable manner. It also depends on the parties involved in a demonstration. This is because in any dialogue it is not sufficient for the parties merely to communicate. A statement made by a dialogue police officer after the events in Gothenburg in 2001 is still hugely relevant:

*“In my opinion, the solution to all conflicts lies in constructive communication in which all parties are willing to find solutions. I hope for a continued, more extensive dialogue where authorities, politicians and organisations, as well as individual persons, take responsibility for ensuring that dialogue takes place and where that responsibility is character-*

*ised by a willingness to become closer to each other rather than increasing the distance from each other.”(Gevreus, 2002)*

If members of the protest group see that the most rational way to get their message across is to make use of democratic methods, they may be more willing to engage in dialogue. The police organisation can to some extent contribute to a form of reward system in this context, but other groups must also be involved in this work.

If one is able to meet undemocratic forces with arguments in a democratic way, it is important that the police cooperate in efforts to ensure that the focus is on the underlying reasons for the problem and the various arguments – not on force or questioning of police methods.

Dialogue can reduce damage to property and injury to persons during manifestations, but the long-term solution to this problem is to reduce the size of extremist groups. Attention must then be paid to the reason for their growth. Groups with completely differing values often focus on approximately the same issues but propose completely different solutions. The problem is one of attending to the breeding ground where these different standpoints have arisen. It should not only be the police who are involved in activities to solve these problems.

Researchers have pointed out that the police should be involved in helping to solve problems which can lead to crime and disturbances. It is more important for the police to be involved in solving problems than focusing on their symptoms (for example, Wilson & Kelling, 1982; Goldstein, 1990; Knutsson, 2003; Knutsson & Søvik, 2005). Instead of merely serving as a buffer between the establishment and people who protest, the police can therefore become involved in ensuring that the message of the protesters is heard. If the police can act in this way, they will not only avoid

criticism for overreacting in situations, they will also be appreciated for problem solving or at least for having helped a disadvantaged group to get its message across (G. Marx, 1998).

### **8.8.3 The police's message**

**ONE ISSUE DISCUSSED** is whether clear opponents to democracy are to be given free rein in political life. In Germany for example, political movements with anti-Democratic appeal are forbidden. In other countries, for example in Scandinavia, a different view prevails: undemocratic forces should be met with arguments<sup>34</sup> in a democratic way. Using bans, it is argued, increase the risk of opposition to democracy becoming glamorised (Hadenius, 2001).

A fundamental principle in Swedish legislation (see *Regeringsformen* (the Swedish Constitution)) is that all people have equal rights, that the rules of democracy should serve as a guiding principle in society and that it is important for constitutional freedoms and rights to be guaranteed. Fundamental freedoms and rights include freedom of speech and the freedom to demonstrate, in which the police have an important role.

The right to express an opinion does not at the same time involve an obligation to allow that opinion to go unchallenged. Every social body is responsible for maintaining and defending the fundamental values of society and that naturally also applies to the police. Section 1 of the Police Act (SFS 1984:387) states that police work constitutes a segment of society's activities.

Because police services in some countries historically have been connected with fascist movements, the police must be extremely careful to act and express themselves in ways that violate human freedoms and rights or which are opposed to fundamental democratic principles. This is even more important when, as in Sweden, there are many people who have experiences of oth-

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<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, offences against popular groups can in some ways be seen as a waiver of this principle.

er regimes and there is a risk that these citizens will more easily associate the actions of the Swedish police with previous experience of police methods in other countries.

A central part of police duties consists of preventive work to reduce crime and to increase public safety (see section 2 of the Police Act, SFS 1984:387). This work includes bringing about changes in behaviour by influencing people's values in certain issues, eg their attitude towards driving a car with alcohol in the blood, persuading people to respect others and not to insult anyone on the grounds of their race or sexual orientation. Preventive work is carried on in cooperation with other groups, for example through different forms of announcements and statements and through visits to schools, where police officers are involved in a range of discussions on society's fundamental values.

The police are required to act within current legislation. This includes protecting groups holding values which the police oppose to in other contexts. There is reason to argue that the police could express their disapproval of values based, for example, on people being considered to be of lower worth due to a certain sexual orientation or race more clearly. Waddington (1998) points out that it would be wrong to incorporate some views and groups into the constitutional system, eg. to treat racism and racist groups as respectable interest groups. Naturally, that must occur without infringing the freedom to demonstrate.

Due to current methods, police protection of certain events is sometimes questioned and the criticism occasionally insinuates that the police have the same opinion as the groups they protect. The fact that the forces of order, as stated above, are used and have been used in regimes such as fascist dictatorships to gain control over people naturally means that there is a risk that the police will be associated with such currents of opinion.

If the police stated their position more clearly there is a good

chance that the values of the various groups and the duty of the police to protect democracy would attract more focus in media. One example of this:<sup>35</sup>

*“...When I see Sweden’s assembled national socialists saunter by in Odenplan on national day, it seems quite obvious that these characters, whatever they think of themselves, would not have a chance even if the enemy sent an invading army of pantomime dancers. They are the most weary collection of Swedes I have ever seen. Many of them have presumably not seen their own feet in years and would find it difficult to wear boots if some foreigner had not invented Velcro ...*

*Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to dismiss the threat of the Nazis for these reasons. Of all the extremist movements monitored by our police, the Nazis are the ones which crop up most frequently in serious crimes of violence. Nazis are dangerous particularly at an individual level. They systematically persecute, now as always, homosexuals, coloured people, Jews... but even as a threat against democracy it is stupid to underestimate them. Murders of police officers, the murder of a trade unionist, a car bomb against a journalist...*

*... There is no doubt that the residents of Vasastan agree that the police did a good job. It was a clear illustration of the fact that it is there that the line of defence of Swedish democracy lies.”(Svenska Dagbladet, 2007)*

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35 A reference is made to a discussion article written by the chief of the police authority, which probably affected the article.

## 9. Closing words

**THE GOTHENBURG COMMITTEE** clearly stated that dialogue activities must be developed (SOU 2002:122).

Effective dialogue activities take time to build up. It can easily occur that the dialogue police are given too much credit in relation to their importance when a dialogue initiative is successful and the purpose of attempting to establish dialogue is questioned if events end in confrontations between the police and demonstrators, despite the fact that extensive dialogue police work was carried out.

The fact that there are designated dialogue police officers is one decisive factor which emerges in several parts of this report. It should also be natural, as in the negotiation unit, to engage external experts in activities, perhaps researchers in matters concerning democracy and people with a detailed knowledge of ethnic conflicts and different religions.

The Swedish National Police Board has begun work to bring about a comprehensive national view of dialogue police activities in Sweden and uniformity in their performance. The acts of one police authority affect other police authorities because activists often carry out actions in different parts of the country. Activists also often have international links, which means that there are also reasons for discussing these matters at international level. More than simply a police matter, this is a question of how a new movement of politically motivated young people can be accommodated within the framework of a democratic society.

Researchers have emphasised the importance of the Gothenburg Committee's conclusions and stated that it is necessary to find forms which allow discussion between decision-makers and the

current political popular movements (della Porta & Reiter, 2006). The investigation on democracy (SOU 2000:1) also underlines the importance of making use of new forms of political involvement at a time when interest in traditional popular movements and political parties is wavering (Uhnöo, 2002; see also Thörn, 1999).

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