

INITIATION AND ESCALATION OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE: AN OBSERVATIONAL STUDY¹

by

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Abstract: *Few studies have looked directly at what happens during collective events and what factors contribute to the initiation and escalation of collective violence. In this chapter, data obtained through systematic observations around 60 football matches and 77 protest events in the Netherlands considered to constitute a risk to public order are presented and analyzed. Among the results are the following: Even in highly escalated incidents of collective violence, the relative number of people actually committing acts of violence is low. Targets of violence do not seem to be randomly chosen. In approximately half of violent incidents there was no recognisable context that could have served as a potential “trigger” for the initiation of violence. The initiation and escalation of violence is strongly linked to interaction between participants from different groups and the relationship between these groups. In addition, the chapter discusses the impact of police style and tactics on the initiation and escalation of collective violence. Finally, the issues of how the results of the study fit in with different theories of collective violence and what they mean for the management of public order are addressed.*

INTRODUCTION

Every society has sporadic and sometimes vehement outbursts of collective violence, be it in the form of urban riots, soccer hooliganism, escalated protest events or festivities gone out of hand. Over the years, analyses of what are considered to be excesses in “crowd behavior” have generated controversy. In 1972 the American sociologist Richard Berk noted that the by then extensive social-scientific literature about the behavior of crowds and the behavior of people in crowds was mostly based on restricted information and unsubstantiated interpretations (Berk, 1972). Almost twenty years later, American sociologist and collective behaviour researcher Clark McPhail (1997, p. 35) indicates that: “*For more than a century the study of crowds was strangled by the methodological stereotype that ‘systematic research can't be done’.*” Similarly, in providing an excellent recent overview of the literature on football hooliganism, Frosdick & Marsh (2005) note how little of this literature was and is based on direct observations, let alone systematic observations, of football violence. As Frosdick & Marsh (2005, p. 31) aptly note: “*This lack of objective facts in theory and research on football hooliganism has bedevilled the debate since the 1960s*”.

And it's not just the lack of objective facts. Little attention is being paid to the fact that collective violence occurs in an intergroup context. Echoing several other authors (e.g. Waddington, 1987; McPhail, Schweingruber et al., 1998; della Porta, 1998), Stott & Reicher (1998a, p 510) indicate that: “*When it comes to psychological explanations of crowd behaviour and – more especially – violence in crowd events, the focus tends to be almost*

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exclusively upon one party: the crowd itself. Psychological studies of the police or army in such encounters are notable almost exclusively for their absence.” Stott and Reicher (1998a, b) therefore urge the study of the inter-group dynamics of crowd-events and the inclusion of the role and perspective of the police.

From a theoretical perspective, explanations for collective violence have traditionally focused on its supposed pathological, irrational and apparently chaotic nature. According to various socio-psychological theories, people in a crowd lose their “awareness of self” and the usual moral inhibitions and limitations are dropped. Following Sighele (1982) and LeBon (1895), it was – and still is – often assumed that there is no longer any kind of rational behaviour in a crowd or mass of people, but on the contrary that there is a (primitive) tendency to do what others are doing. Suppressed desires surface in the behaviour. A transformation is supposed to occur where people change and display other behaviour purely as a consequence of the fact that they are part of a crowd. Zimbardo’s so-called “de-individuation theory” (Zimbardo, 1969) is often cited in this context. According to de-individuation theory, the excitement and the anonymity of being in a group lead to uninhibited behaviour and the normal limitations that people force upon themselves are lost. Due to the supposed psychological processes, individual identities are lost and individuals become exceptionally susceptible to suggestions and incitement by “leaders”. Characteristic of this view is that every crowd (a collection of people) can become a “mob” as a result of the actions of leader figures, the appearance of a hated person or hated object, acts of violence, police action or the lack thereof. In many countries these ideas have in the course of time become (and often still are) the basis for the education and training of police units deployed in (potential) riot situations (e.g. Schweingruber, 2000).

This was the situation when my research on the initiation and escalation of collective violence started in the 1980s. The main interest was not so much violent fans or protesters themselves or the root causes of collective violence, but rather to gain insight into the way into which violence in collective settings, such as football or protest events, starts and escalates.

To study the initiation and escalation of collective violence, interactions around protest events and football matches were observed in a structured and systematic manner. The word *interaction* is important here, as the starting point for the research was that violence always involves at least an actor and a target and that the behaviour cannot be understood without paying attention to the interaction between these. Apart from the focus on interaction, the study differed in a number of other respects from earlier studies because of its quantitative and comparative nature. Importantly, the study was not restricted to escalated riot-situations, but included a number of comparable events that were considered to pose a risk to public order and where violence was seen as a real possibility, some of which led to disorder or turned into a riot whereas others did not. In total, 700 observation hours were recorded on audio tape (this is exclusive of time spent in pre-observation reconnaissance and information gathering and post event data gathering).

The first goal of the study was to provide a structured and contextualised description of violent interactions around protest and football events in the Netherlands. The second aim was to analyse factors in the interaction and its immediate context that seemed to be associated with the initiation or escalation of collective violence, realising that the factors associated with *initiation* of violence are not necessarily the same as the one associated with *escalation*. So far, most of the results of this study were published in Dutch only (Adang,

1988; 1991; 1998). First, the main results are presented, with data on protest and football being presented in a comparative way. As a next step, the initiation and escalation of collective violence is discussed, especially in light of how the results of the study fit in with existing theories of collective violence. Finally, the impact of police style and tactics on the initiation and escalation of collective violence is discussed, as well as the potential implications of these results for the management of public order.

MATERIAL AND METHODOLOGY: OBSERVING COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

The investigation period lay between May 1986 and September 1989. Data gathered around 60 football events and 77 protest events in the Netherlands, some of which went peacefully whereas others were characterised by extensive disorder, are presented. Additional efforts were made to observe events where there seemed to be an increased likelihood for violence to occur. The background of the methodology as well as definitions of the behavioural categories used are dealt with elsewhere (Adang, in preparation). In all cases, observations on locations that were in principle accessible to anyone (i.e. on public roads and in stadiums) were made by walking around with a photobag over the shoulder and a portable cassette recorder in the jacket pocket, while listening into police channels via a scanner. The observations were recorded directly onto tape. Observational positions were chosen to obtain an overview of events (thus usually not in the middle of a group but at the edge or at a short distance).

Systematic observations were conducted specifically during and around *protest events* where special police units (riot police, arrest units, horses or dogs) were deployed and violence seemed likely based on past experiences or explicit calls for violence by protesters³. As it turned out, 80% of all violent protest events reported about in the media (on national television or at least one of two national newspapers) during the research period were included in the observations. Additionally, protest events with at least 1,000 expected participants were included in the observations, irrespective of the likelihood of violence. As it turned out, 50% of all protest-actions with at least 1,000 participants reported in the media (national television or at least one of two national newspapers) during the research period were, in fact, observed.

There were large variations between the numbers of protesters per observation. The smallest protest event included a few dozen participants, whereas the largest demonstration had an estimated turn out of around 150,000 participants. The median number of protesters over all observations was 150 (it is meaningless to provide a mean, given the wide range with a few very large demonstrations).

The observations typically started at the meeting point designated by the participants some time before the activity was planned to start. The observations lasted until after the end of the event and the dispersal of the participants had clearly started.

³ Use-of-force by police was labeled as police violence, as it conforms to the definition of violence as used for the behaviour of protesters and fans.

Out of the 77 protest observations, Mobile units (riot police) were deployed in 36, civilian arrest units were deployed in 21, mounted police were deployed in 29, and dog handlers were used in 8 cases.

The observed *football events* were selected based on whether one or more of the five clubs perceived by police and media as being accompanied by so-called risk-fan groups were involved. Meetings between two risk-clubs playing in the Dutch premier league (Eredivisie) occurred in 28 of the 60 football observations conducted over the course of 3 football seasons. The observations started when a group of away fans arrived in or nearby the city where the game was to be played (usually by special train) and ended when they left.

On average, 3 times as many away-fans (average 765, median 700) were present during meetings between two risk clubs than meetings between a risk-club and a non-risk club (average 277, median 200). The away fans generally formed 4 to 5% of the total number of spectators. Matches between two risk clubs were attended, on average, by around 15,000 spectators (median 10,000, minimum 2,500, maximum 45,500), with other games averaging around 6,800 spectators (median 6,000, minimum 2,000 and maximum 13,500).

Of the 60 football observations, there were 41 cases where Mobile units were actually deployed, 27 cases where arresting units were present, 35 cases with mounted police and 49 cases with dog handlers.

RESULTS

Violent Interactions

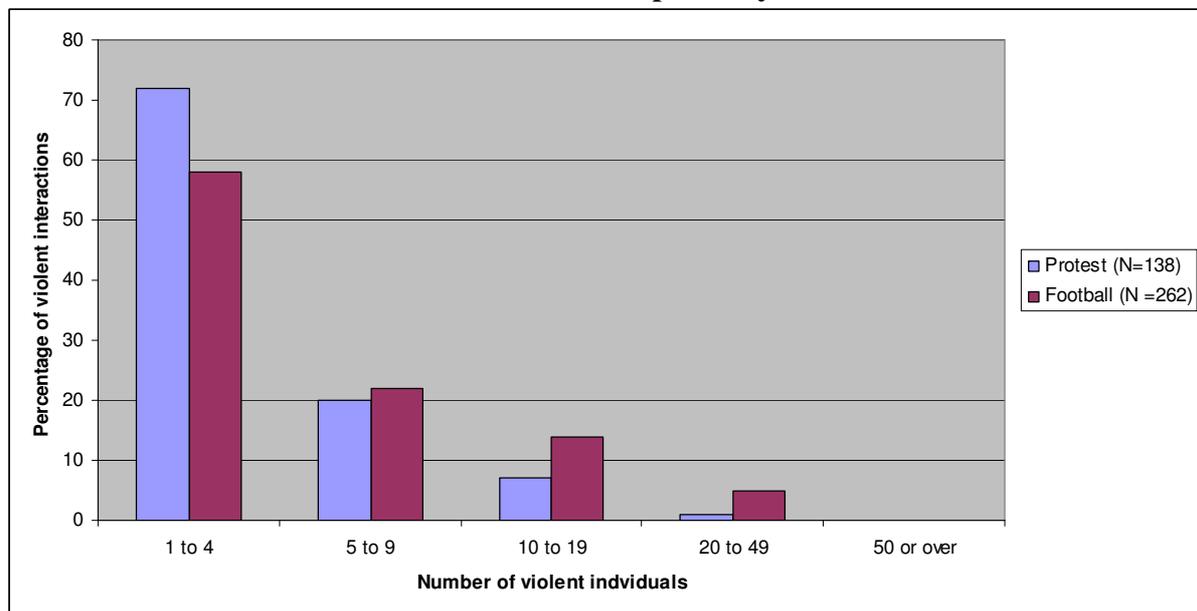
Violence by protesters was observed in 53% (N=77) of protest events, while violence by fans was observed in 92% (N=60) of football matches. In total, 428 violent initiatives by protesters and fans could be observed, 138 by protesters and 290 by fans (66% away fans, 34%, home fans). For the protest observations, this amounted to 2 per observation and 0.7 per observation hour; for the football observations, there were almost 5 violent initiatives per observation and 1.4 per observation hour. As far as the police are concerned, 130 violent initiatives by police were observed (i.e. not counting police use of violence in direct response to violence directed at the police), 51 around protest (i.e. 0.3 per observation hour) and 79 around football (i.e. 0.4 per observation hour) events.

In addition 485 instances of (non-violent) provocative behaviour (offending or threatening words/ gestures; running charges; blocking a street or an entrance to a building/ compound) was observed (protest 168, football 317). Both protesters and fans frequently engaged in insulting or threatening behaviour. Protesters (but not fans) frequently blocked roads or entrances, fans (but not protesters) occasionally performed running charges.

Coercive police measures (i.e. stopping, removing or arresting) were more frequent: a total of 666 police measures were observed (442 around football, 224 around protest). The escorting of fans frequently involved (temporarily) stopping fans, e.g. after arrival by train, before entering the stadium (where they would be searched before being allowed to enter) or before leaving the stadium. During protest events that involved blockades, police would frequently act to remove protesters and break the blockade.

Figure 1 represents the estimates of the number of people behaving violently during interactions. The average number of individuals from the same group behaving violently was estimated at 3 to 4. In more than half of the cases, the maximum number of violent individuals in an interaction was less than 5. During both protest events and football matches, instances where 50 or more individuals from a single group were actively violent during the same interaction comprised less than 1% of all violent interactions. On no occasion was more than 10% of individuals belonging to the same group (e.g. the away fans) actively violent during the same interaction. Relative to the total number of individuals present (e.g. all spectators in a football stadium, all participants in a demonstration) the number of violent individuals was always less than 1% of the total group.

Figure 1. Number of Individuals Actively Performing Violent Behaviour During Violent Interactions in Protest and Football Events Respectively.



This does not mean that other group members were not involved in violent altercations. During both protest events and football matches, larger numbers of other group members lent vocal support to the violence (64 % of protest events incidents; 47% of football incidents). The number of individuals performing these behaviours was generally 5 to 10 times as high as the number of actively violent individuals: up to 80% of participants could be involved. On average, 20 protesters or 40 fans were involved in insulting or threatening behaviour when violence was not occurring. A similar picture arises from participation in blockades by protesters (on average 25 protesters actively participated in blockades, N=82), and participation in running charges by fans (on average 20 fans participated in running charges, N=39). Explicit disapproval of violence by individuals forming part of the same group was rare: it happened in 9% of violent incidents during protest events and in 3% of violent incidents around football matches. Only a very limited number of individuals were involved in acts of disapproval or self-policing.

Almost all protesters and fans performing violence were male with an estimated age between 15 and 25 (violent protesters > 90% males; fans > 99% males). For fans this is not surprising,

as groups of fans travelling to away matches are almost exclusively composed of young males, but groups of protesters were generally more evenly composed of males and females and of higher average age (estimated average age around 30 to 35 years).

Types of Violence and Targets

The most common form of violence observed was object-throwing, especially at other individuals/ groups (Figure 2). Physical violence was less common, as was vandalising of objects. In using violence, protesters sometimes used objects (such as paint-bombs or sticks) that they had brought to the scene themselves. Fans, who would know that they were to be searched, almost always used objects that were at hand.

Figure 2. Form of Violence Used during Violent Interactions in Protest and Football Events Respectively.

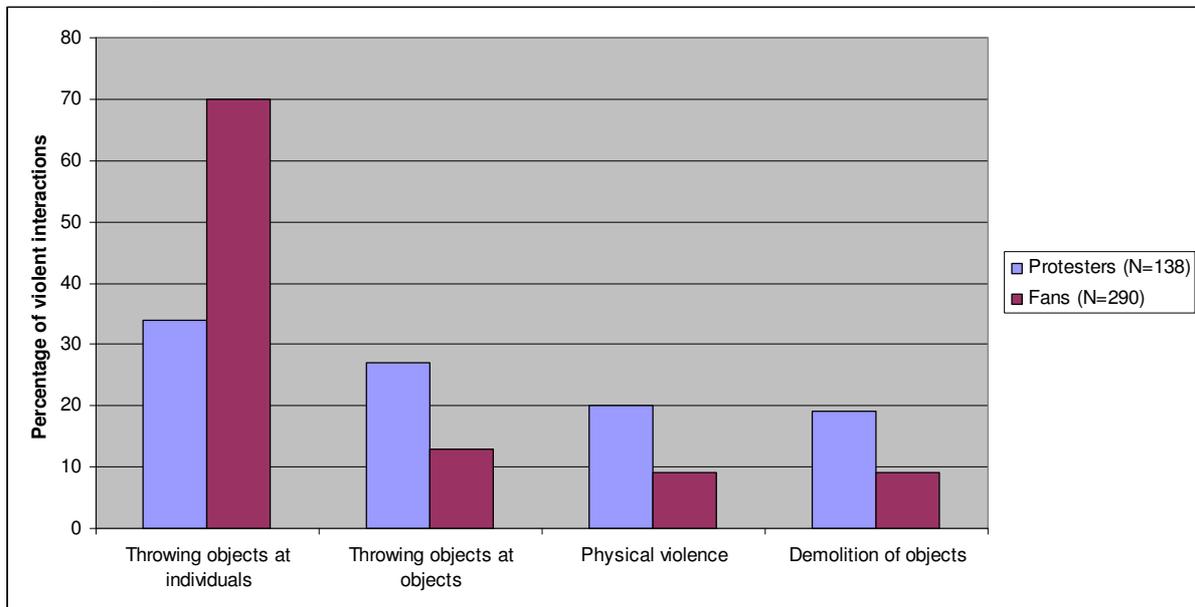


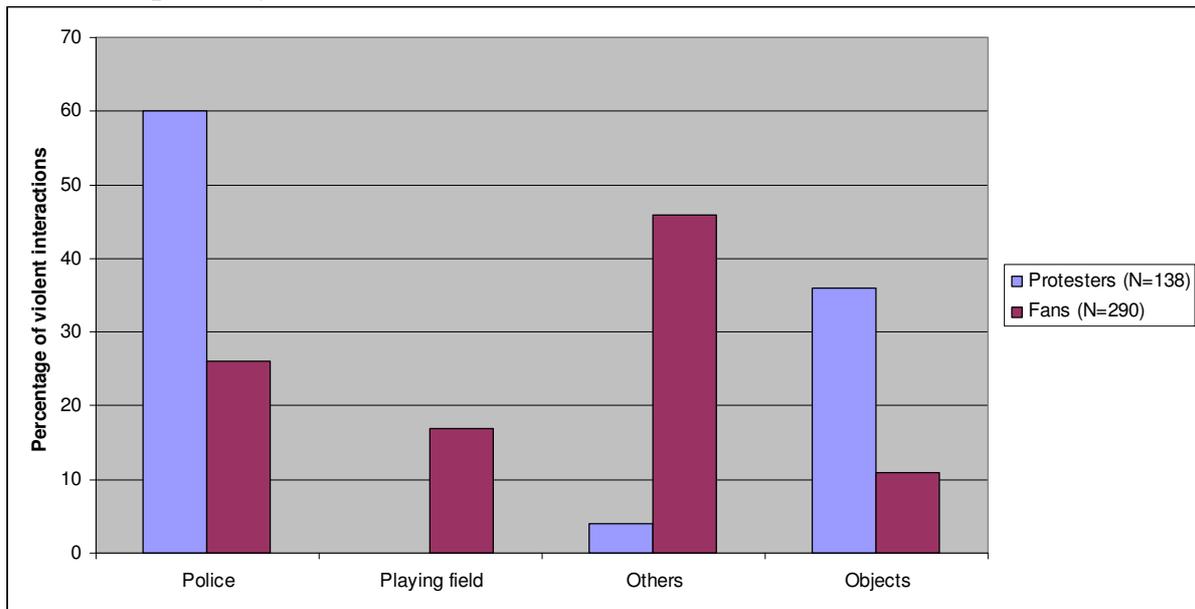
Figure 2 shows the percentage of violent interactions with either object throwing or physical violence against individuals or objects (when several forms were displayed during the same interaction, only the more severe form was counted, with physical violence being considered more severe than throwing, and violence directed at individuals considered more severe than violence directed at objects).

The main targets (60%) for protesters were the police or police-related objects such as police-vehicles or police-buildings (Figure 3). Other objects that were targeted frequently had some connection to the specific issue of the protest (e.g. government buildings or the embassy of the country to which the protest was directed were targeted in 20% of the cases) or to protests in general (e.g. banks, offices of multinationals were a target in 7% of the cases). On 5 occasions (i.e. 4%), protesters directed violence toward third parties (e.g. passing car drivers or counter-protesters). On 7 occasions (5%), protesters themselves were the targets of violent

initiatives by third parties. On 13 occasions (9%), violence was used against a target that was unrelated in any way to the protest (e.g., a traffic light).

For football fans, “others” (i.e. rival fan groups) were the main target (45%). Police were also a frequent target (25%), as was the playing field (players, referee, linesmen; 20%) or objects (fences, buses, trains etc.; 10%). Figure 3 shows the percentage of violent interactions with violence aimed at police, other groups or individuals, objects or the playing field (during football events).

Figure 3. Targets of Violence During Violent Interactions in Protest and Football Events Respectively.



Contexts in Which Violence Occurred

In almost all cases (protest events 96%, football 95%), the events immediately preceding violent initiatives were observed as well. In around half of the cases, violent initiatives followed one of previously defined immediate contexts (i.e. occurring within 2 minutes of that context, see Figure 4). For protesters, the most common immediate context was measures being taken by police (32% of all violent initiatives). In 10% of the cases, a violent initiative immediately followed a previously occurring instance of violence, e.g. when protesters first attacked the police and then a building (agonistic context). Competition with or provocations by others (e.g. individuals trying to pass a blockade, drivers trying to drive through a demonstration) were less common contexts for violence. For football fans, 14% of violent initiatives were preceded by events on the playing field (e.g. a goal being scored, a disputed referee decision), 12% occurred in an agonistic context, 11% were preceded by police measures, and 9% followed provocations by other fans.

It became clear that the immediate context of violent initiatives was different for different targets: violence by fans in the direction of the pitch was relatively strongly linked to match events, while violent initiatives from fans or protesters against the police appeared relatively

often in connection with coercive police measures. During both protest events and football matches, more than half of the violence between fans/ protesters and police occurred in the context of coercive measures applied by the police (56% of the violence directed at the police and 71% of the violence performed by the police). In addition to this, 25% of the violence by fans against objects (but only 5% of the violence by protesters against objects) occurred in a context of coercive police measures.

Both for protesters and fans, however, no clear immediate context could be discerned in about half of the cases in which the situation immediately preceding a violent initiative was observed,. In these cases, the violence did not seem to arise in response to a specific triggering event. Of course, it could be argued that this was due to observational constraints and that more triggering events would have been identified had observations been more accurate. However, based on observations with a continuously good view of all participants involved and based on repeated viewing of incidents caught on video, sufficient evidence exists to conclude that violence did not occur in direct response to an identifiable event or action from the target in many instances.

Figure 4. Immediate Contexts of Violent Initiatives.

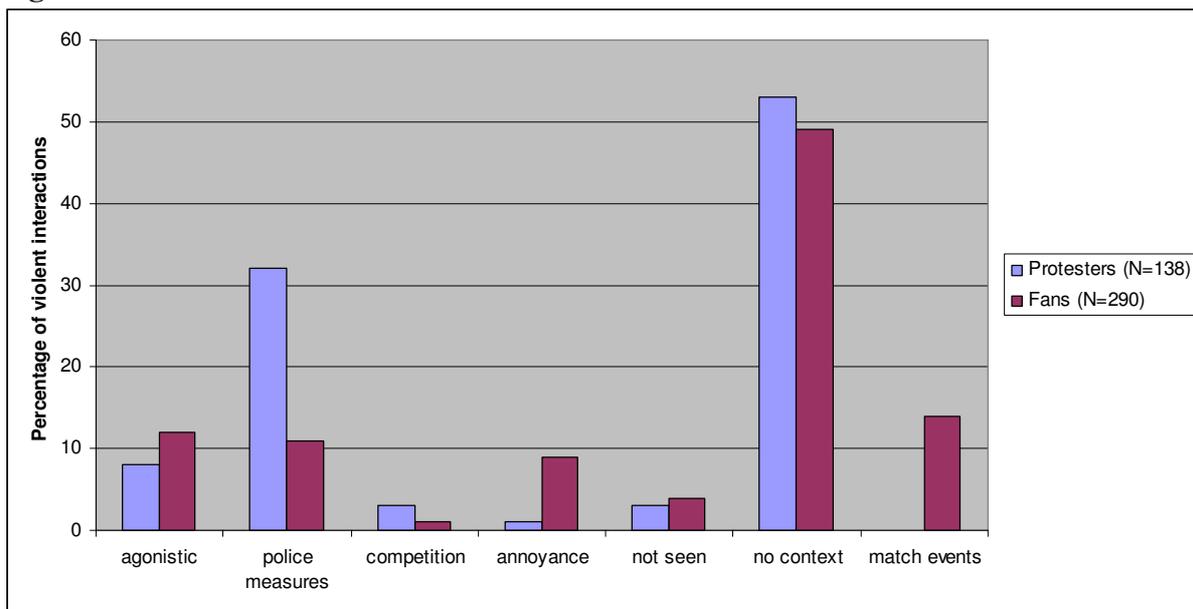


Figure 4 shows the percentage of violent interactions starting within 2 minutes after one of several predefined immediate contexts (explanation in text). “Not seen” indicates instances where the period preceding the violent initiative was not observed in its entirety. “No context” indicates instances where the period preceding the violent initiative was observed in its entirety and none of the predefined immediate contexts was deemed to have occurred.

For protest events, there was a strong association between the presence of individuals wearing balaclavas (as determined at the start of the observation) and the likelihood and frequency of violence. When individuals wearing balaclavas were present (N=35) violence occurred in 80% of the observations, compared to 33% when they were not present (N=42). The difference with regard the frequency of violence was even more pronounced: 1.6 vs. 0.45

violent initiatives per observation hour. There seemed to exist a strong antagonistic relationship between groups of individuals wearing balaclavas (often referring to themselves as “autonomen” or “black block”) and the police.

In relation to football, the observations suggested that the relationship between different fan groups is an important factor and that the mere presence of rival fans was often sufficient to elicit violence. An analysis of official police data gathered by the Dutch National Football Information Point CIV from the season 1986/ 1987 made clear that the likelihood of an incident was increased six-fold (47% vs 8%) if a discernible group of away fans was present compared to when this was not the case (the CIV data contain an incident for 87 of 140 matches with a discernible away group and for 14 out of 165 matches without away fans). When rival fans groups met, the likelihood of incidents was particularly high (the CIV-data contain incidents for 89% of 15 encounters around matches between what they designate as “risk teams”). As far as the observations are concerned, away fans were present during all observations except four. In three of these cases, no violence was observed. The frequency of violence differed markedly based on whether or not two “risk teams” encountered one another (2.5/h vs 1.2/h, Mann- Whitney – U test, $p < .001$).

The analysis of immediate contexts reveals what potential triggers preceded violence. However, it is important to note that not all potential triggers were followed by violence. The frequency with which potential triggers were followed by a violent initiative is discussed below.

Other Conflicts as a Potential Trigger

Of all 290 violent initiatives by fans, 23 (13%) were followed by another violent initiative (counter violence not being considered as such). There were different ways in which this could occur:

- Fans that used violence chose a second target (12 cases): this second target was mainly the police.
- Fans reacted to (and against) other fan groups that used violence against the police, the pitch or objects (5 cases).
- Fans that experienced violence from another fan group reacted with violence against the police or against objects (2 cases).
- 4 remaining cases where fans acted violently against objects first and then against other fans or the police.

Of all 138 violent initiatives by protesters, 5% were followed by another violent initiative (as when protesters were first violent against police and then against another target, or the other way around).

Pitch Events as a Potential Trigger

Disputed referee decisions, violence on the pitch and goals being scored were included as potential triggers for violence by football fans. The event on the field that was followed by violence most frequently was the score of a goal point by one of the teams. The 32 goal points that formed the trigger for violence constituted 19% of all scored goal points (total 168 goals). Goal points where one of the teams reached an advantage over the other side with one or two goal points were most frequently followed by violence; more so than when a lead was being reduced, an equalizer was being scored, or a lead was being raised still further (Chi-square test, $p < 0.05$). Fans from the scoring team and those from the other team were equally likely to initiate violence (44% against 56% Chi-square test, not significant). In most cases (20), the violence was directed at the rival fan group; in 9 cases the violence was directed at

(individuals on) the pitch.

After the game there was, for both away and home fans, absolutely no connection between violence and the result of the match. Both home and away fans were not more violent after their club lost compared to when it had won.

Of the observed 72 instances of violence on the pitch, 7 of those (10%) were followed by violence in the stands. Of the observed 32 controversial referee rulings, 4 (11%) were followed by violence. In these instances, the violence was directed in 55% of cases toward the pitch and in the rest of cases to the other fan group. There were no indications that the initiation of violence was linked to other match events such as prolonged interruptions (e.g., because of an injury treatment).

Provocations as a Potential Trigger

During the football observations, a total of 217 provocations were observed. Only a small part of these were followed by fan violence (16, or less than 5%). Mostly, there was no reaction to provocations. If there was a response, it was usually in a similar vein. During protest events, provocations by third parties were rare (N=15, 2 of these were followed by violence).

Competition as a Potential Trigger

Competition for space was a frequently occurring potential trigger during protest events (N=305). This obviously occurred when protesters blocked a road or an entrance, but the mere presence of a demonstration on a public road could create disagreements with car drivers. This only led to violence on occasions that police had not taken any regulatory measures (in the case of a blockade) or when car drivers tried to force their way through a demonstration (7 occasions).

Police Measures as a Potential Trigger

An important finding was that if away fans were stopped by police on arrival at the station there was a significant increase in fan violence compared to when they were not stopped (46% vs 0%, Chi-square test $P < 0.001$). There was no noticeable effect between stopping or not stopping fans during searches at the entrance of the stadium. After the game there was a clear difference: there was more often violence when away-fans were held back compared to when they were permitted to leave the stands immediately following the game (45% vs 5%, Chi-square test; $p < 0.001$). Holding fans in the stands was supposed to prevent violence outside the stadium: in this way away- and home-fans should be more effectively separated from each other. However, detaining away-fans for a short period did not appear to decrease the frequency of violence during the following phases.

By far, the most frequent coercive police measure used during protest events was the (re)moving of protesters. During protest events, coercive police measures in response to blockades was often associated with violence by protesters (19%, N=359).

Reactions to Violence

Violence by protesters or fans did not always elicit a police response. During protest events, the police responded within 2 minutes in some way to 45% of violence towards the police (N=83) and 7 % of the violence directed towards other targets (N=55). For 22% of violence against other targets (N=55, often inanimate objects such as buildings), a response could be noted from the target or individuals related to the target (e.g. people inside a building). The police responded within 2 minutes to 49% of violence by fans towards the police (N=65) and 35% of the violence directed towards other targets (N=225).

Compared with police, fans responded more often (Chi-square test, $p < .05$) to violence directed at them by other fans: 68% of the cases ($N=128$). Fan violence led to counter-violence in 24% of the cases if the police was targeted and 36% of the cases when other fans were the target. Fan reaction to violence could also be limited to non-violent behaviours, such as vocalisations (abusive calling, threats, laughter). It is worth noting that flight/ evasive reactions were rare, as was the absence of positive (conciliatory) reactions. Other reactions that amounted to "ignoring" the violence (e.g., "just looking") frequently occurred. The manner in which fans or the police reacted to violence appeared to depend upon the number of individuals that committed violence: if there were more violent fans the likelihood of a violent reaction was greater (Chi-square test, $p < 0.05$).

Less than half of all violent initiatives taken by protesters or fans were followed – within 2 minutes - by other violent acts from the same group (protest events 43%, football 41%). Fan violence tended to last longer if the target reacted with violence. When violence continued, interactions lasted an average of 3 minutes (protest events 161 sec, $N=59$; football 187 sec, $N=119$). Interestingly, this average was the same irrespective of the reaction of the target or the police response (if any). Police interventions seemed to have more of an effect on the likelihood of subsequent initiatives to occur, as analysis of between-interaction intervals made clear (see below).

Police Measures

Police were visibly present during all observations. In most cases, the police were a very short distance away from both protesters and fans (within talking/hitting distance). Even if the police presence was less conspicuous (as would often be the case inside the stadium), they were available (and known to be so) to respond to any situation that might arise. Nevertheless, there was a clear trend showing that the greater the distance between police and away-fans, the greater the probability of fan violence. This difference was especially marked at the station after arrival of the train carrying away-fans (Chi-square test, $p < 0.03$) and inside the stadium, both before the game and during the halftime break (Chi-square tests, $p < 0.01$).

As indicated above, frequently during protest events, the targeted objects had some connection to the specific issue of the protest (so-called 'risk-objects'). These objects were sometimes "guarded" by a police presence. When they were not guarded, they were more likely to be targeted (54% of 26 risk-objects identified beforehand that were not guarded were attacked, as opposed to 15% of 68 that were; Chi-square test, $p < .001$). The same trend was visible on occasions with potential for confrontation with 'third parties': if police were not close-by when traffic tried to pass a demonstration or people passed a picket-line, violence by protesters was more likely (Chi-square test, $p < .05$).

Both protesters and fans were frequently subjected to coercive measures by police. Away-fans were often stopped by the police (1) after arrival at the railway station, (2) after arrival at the stadium and (3) before departure from the stadium. Stopping of fans occurred frequently in an effort to keep the group together or hold it effectively under control (e.g., while entering or leaving buses). Fans were searched and their tickets were checked before entering the stadium. In a number of cases, fan groups were stopped to keep them separate from other fans. Removing fans often served another aim, namely to put an end to violence (or clearly impending violence). In these cases the measures were a response to events. On other occasions, fans were removed without any preceding violence in an attempt to keep different

fan groups separate or to regulate the behavior of the fans (e.g, while exiting or boarding the train). Making an arrest (64 arrests were observed around football matches) was, in principle, a reactive form of police-action, but only 44% of fan arrests directly followed the actual offence. In the rest of the cases, the arrest was delayed and made at a moment considered more suitable. In all cases, the aim of an arrest was to serve judicial purposes: upholding of the law and confrontation of individuals with the judicial consequences of their actions. It is not known if this actually happened in all observed cases. In addition, the arrests immediately following the offence could also be aimed at stopping undesirable behaviours.

(Re)moving protesters served to get them away from 'risk-objects' or to break blockades. Moving was the most frequently observed police measure, especially when protesters blocked streets or entrances to buildings. The monthly blockades held at the military base in Woensdrecht (where US cruise missiles with nuclear warheads were planned to be stationed) led to frequent (temporary) moving of protesters to allow traffic to pass. On a number of occasions (groups of) protesters were arrested as well. The stopping of protesters was used to keep them away from risk-objects or blockades and was most often used pro-actively (in 87% of the cases), whereas removing protesters was usually a response to behaviour considered undesirable by police (83% of the cases). On a few occasions, protesters were moved as a means to stop violence. During protests, all but 2 observed arrests (a total of 63 arrests with 335 arrestees were observed during protests) directly followed the alleged offence. Thirteen of these arrests were in connection with violent behaviour by protesters, while all others were made in connection with less serious offenses (usually related to blocking a public highway). Again, the aim of arrests was to serve judicial purposes: upholding of the law and confrontation of individuals with the judicial consequences of their actions. Arrests immediately following the offence could also be aimed at stopping undesirable behaviours, and the groupwise arrests made during the monthly blockades in Woensdrecht mainly served that purpose (personal communication by commanding officer).

Riot police in full gear were responsible for most of the violence used by the police¹, both against fans and protesters. Of course, these units were deployed specifically in situations considered to constitute increased risk. This was less true of dog handlers who also used violence relatively often, whereas mounted police in comparable situations used less violence (chi-square test, $p < 0.001$). However, these differences in police violence could not be explained by the severity of the violence or the amount of troublesome behavior that was directed at the police by fans (Chi-square tests, not significant).

The police reacted in some form (within 2 minutes) to 38% of all violent initiatives by fans and 50% of violent initiatives by protesters. This police interference did not systematically lead to discontinuing of violent initiatives: the percentage of violent initiatives that were continued and the duration of the violence did not vary in relation to whether or not the police had acted. To determine if police interference had a long-term effect, the intervals between violent fan interactions were subjected to an analysis with the help of log-survivors⁴. It appeared that police interference significantly decreased the chance that violence would start anew: both for protest and football events it took, on average, longer before a new

⁴ Survival analysis is a branch of statistics which tries to answer questions such as: what is the fraction of a population which will survive past a certain time, in this case how long does an interval without fan violence last? With this analysis the fact that not all the cases of violence were followed by new violence (the so-called censors) was taken into account.

violent initiative occurred if the police reacted (no matter in what manner) compared to situations where there was no police reaction.

In total, 79 violent police initiatives were observed (N.B. these do not include police reactions to fan violence directed at the police itself). Police initiatives to use violence/ force appeared most often as part of the use of coercive measures (71% of the cases). In almost all other cases, violent police initiatives were a reaction to troublesome or violent behaviour of fans (not directed at the police itself). In 13 cases, the police was seen to use violence/ force in reaction to fan violence directed at the police (and it was thus not a violent initiative by police). In 6 cases, the use of violence by the police seemed incomprehensible in the sense that it was unclear what aim was served by the violence.

DISCUSSION: THE INITIATION AND ESCALATION OF COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE

The first conclusion to be drawn from the study is that it is possible to conduct meaningful structured observations of episodes of collective violence. A limitation of the methodology is, of course, that structural causes or the psychology of collective violence are not being addressed. The current methodology concentrates on the short-term processes that are associated with violent behavior in collective situations. Even though protest events and football matches provide very different situations for collective behaviour, the results clearly indicate some important similarities between them. Both in relation to football and protest events, even in highly escalated incidents of collective violence, the relative number of people actually committing acts of violence is low, targets of violence do not seem to be randomly chosen and in approximately half of violent incidents there was no recognisable potential “trigger” for the initiation of violence in the immediate context.

The observations lead to the following conclusions with regard to the behaviour of people in collective settings:

- The agency in collective violence is clearly at the individual level: people make individual choices and do not behave more or less uniformly (the “illusion of unanimity” mentioned by McPhail, 1991). This does not detract from the fact that individuals are fundamentally social beings and that their decisions are influenced by their social environment. Both for protest events and football matches, the relevance of the immediate context and the interactive action – reaction nature of these processes is manifest.
- There is no reason to assume that, within collective settings, the mere presence in a crowd makes people more likely to use violence: the vast majority of the people in the observed instances of collective violence (which included some severe riots that made headlines in the media) were not violent at all. The literature indicates that there are reasons to believe that many of those actively seeking out violence in collective settings are more likely to use violence in other circumstances as well (e.g. van den Brug, 1986; van de Valk & Linckens, 1988) and of course, in most collective situations there is no violence at all (this study focused specifically on situations where violence was considered to be more likely)

- There is no reason to assume that, within collective settings, people show a higher tendency to perform so-called emotional or irrational behaviour. On the contrary, even in violent collective settings, people clearly made choices and behaved in ways that were meaningful to themselves. The choices individuals made seemed to be consistent with a model of (bounded) rationality (cf. McPhail, 1991): they prepared themselves, pursued goals and clearly took risks into account. There is every reason to believe that the behaviour of people in collective settings is influenced by the same factors that influence their "normal" everyday behaviour. Rather than behaving without norms, the data indicate that even in violent situations, certain norms seem to be taken into account, as indicated by restrained behavior (all-out violence is very rare), the choice of "appropriate" targets and examples of self-policing. In addition, both violent protesters and violent fans adhered to certain rules, the most important being to stick together and support one another during confrontations. In this respect the findings are consistent with Turner & Killian (1985) and Reicher (1984; 1996) who convincingly show that (perceived) norms become more rather than less important in collective situations, although the nature of the norms may vary.

Specifically with regard to the initiation and escalation of collective violence, the results of this study indicate that as far as the *initiation* of collective violence is concerned, a distinction should be made between two types of violence:

1. Violence that is linked to a clearly identifiable trigger. This type of violence is *reactive* - it is a response to specific elements or frictions in a situation, be it provocations by other fans or third parties, events on the pitch (in the case of football), measures taken by police, or some other identifiable trigger. Theoretically, this type of violence is easily linked to familiar aggression theories (e.g. aggression out of frustration), competition for limited resources or as a response to threats. As with other forms of aggression, males are more likely to react aggressively than females, and adolescents/ young adults (individuals between the ages of 15 and 25) are more likely to react aggressively than individuals from other age groups. Having said that, males from other age groups and females may react aggressively to certain triggers on occasion. The targets of the violence may vary, but they are usually linked with the trigger preceding the behaviour (except in cases of redirected aggression).
2. Violence that is not linked to a clearly identifiable trigger. This type of violence is not reactive, but seems to arise more spontaneously. It is performed almost exclusively by groups of male adolescents/ young adult males and is directed specifically at similar, rival groups of young males. The individuals and groups concerned seem to actively seek out opportunities to confront rival groups. Theoretically, this type of violence can be seen as another expression of the so-called "young male syndrome" (Wilson & Daly, 1985), the tendency of young males to take risks and be violent because they discount the future in favour of short-term gains. The evidence suggests that this tendency is primarily a masculine attribute and is socially facilitated by the presence of peers in pursuit of the same goals. Violent male-male disputes are really concerned with "face," dominance status, and what Goffman (1959) calls "presentation of self in a highly competitive social milieu". The involvement of especially young males in episodes of collective violence is well documented in the literature.

The distinction between the two types of violence is not absolute and an obvious overlap is

created by the fact that the young male syndrome may also be expressed in response to triggers that may seem trivial to outsiders.

Different mechanisms are responsible for the *escalation* of violence however:

1. On the one hand, there is the (perceived) risk of retaliation. From the observational data, it is quite clear that only a small minority of a group engages in the most risky types of behaviour, while the majority of participants opt for less risky alternatives (shouting, gesturing, running) or do not become involved at all. Even for those being violent, there is a lot more missile throwing than physical fighting, and redirected aggression at inanimate objects (fences, buses, trains) rather than at individuals that can fight back. There is something contradictory here, as the young male syndrome is characterised by risk-taking behaviour and engaging in violence involves just that. However, within that framework, individuals seem intent on avoiding “unnecessary” risks and on reducing risks. The fact that the young males, when violent, operate in groups is a form of risk-reduction in itself, as is the fact that they avoid or flee from confrontations that they seem unable to win, as was observed on several occasions. In several respects, the data show that violence became more likely when there was no police present at risk locations. In addition, police are more often avoided than confronted and – especially for fans - most confrontations with police occurred only *after* police had taken some kind of coercive measure. Violent fans and protestors regularly took measures to hide their faces to make recognition more difficult and avoid identification and arrest. In the last part of the study-period, CCTV cameras were introduced into football stadiums. It was clear that violent fans disliked these cameras intensely and preferred to remain anonymous to authorities that could punish them for their behaviour. These risk-reducing attempts to maintain “anonymity” (to authorities, not to their fellow fans!) are to be distinguished from the so-called deindividuation effect of “anonymity”, for which there is no support (Postmes & Spears, 1998)⁵. The evidence for bounded rationality in combination with the relevance of opportunities to be violent with limited risk for escalation provide a link between collective violence and principles of situational crime prevention (Clarke, 1995).
2. The second important escalation mechanism, is the existence of an “us versus them” antagonism. The more antagonistic the relationships between different groups, the higher the frequency of observed violence. This was clearly the case for the relations between rival fan groups and for the relationship between certain groups of protestors (“autonomen/ black block”) and police. Stott & Reicher, 1998a, p. 510 claim other studies show that: “... *crowd conflict characteristically arises when official agencies such as the police or the army intervene against unofficial mass action*”. Although the results of this study indicate that collective violence was not *characteristically* triggered by police action, collectively applied coercive police measures were often associated with an *escalation* of violence. The collective nature of these measures contributes to or exacerbates (or may even create) an “us vs them” perspective that can lead to more explicit ingroup/ outgroup behaviour and to more individuals behaving violently. Theoretically, the elaborated social identity model (ESIM), which states that collective ‘disorder’ is made possible through the shared psychological salience of a common social identity among crowd participants is relevant here

⁵ According to deindividuation theories, anonymity causes antinormative and disinhibited behavior.

(Reicher, 1984, 1996). The defining dimensions of this identity serve to explain the normative limits of collective action, (what people do) and the extent of participation (who does and does not join in) during a crowd event. This 'social identity' analysis argues that the dynamics of intergroup interaction are integral to the psychology of widespread 'disorder'. Stott & Reicher (e.g. 1998a) indicate that when an initially heterogeneous crowd has come to be treated as a homogeneous whole by the police, this has led crowd members to reconceptualise themselves as members of a common category, thus setting up a cycle of tension and escalating conflict.

There is a theoretical debate going on between different explanations for collective violence (Reicher, 1996; Stott & Reicher, 1998b), with one side arguing for the importance of predispositions. This perspective suggests that collective violence is an outcome of the convergence of individuals who are predisposed toward creating 'disorder' (e.g. "hooligans"). This approach does not explain how and why collective violence erupts in specific circumstances but not in others. The other side argues the need for a contextualised, group-dynamic understanding of collective violence. The results of this study with regard to the relevance of context, intergroup interaction and intergroup relationships support this last approach. At the same time, it is clear that there are variations in the willingness of individuals to become involved in violence, with some actively seeking opportunities to be violent, without the need for external triggers (other than the presence of a rival group). The initiation/escalation model of collective violence presented in this paper could be seen as a first step toward combining these different theoretical approaches.

PUBLIC ORDER MANAGEMENT

The findings of the study have clear implications for the management of public order. To prevent collective violence, wherever possible and feasible, frictions should be avoided. This requires facilitating the legitimate activities and intentions of participants as far as possible and identifying potential areas of friction. In addition, monitoring and observing events in real time serves to note instances where frictions start to arise. Measures should be taken to prevent frictions or to deal with their consequences from an early stage onwards. This involves communicating with participants and informing them to learn what is affecting them, to avoid misunderstandings about measures being taken and to gain compliance. With regard to groups of young males looking for confrontations, it will be relevant to identify and get to know them, to be able to influence them from an early stage onwards, making clear to them what limits will be set to their behaviour. This also involves communicating with them directly. For their risk-perception, it should be clear to them (and others) what effective measures will be taken if they transgress these limits. By getting to know them, their anonymity to authorities will be reduced. The management of public order should avoid as much as possible taking measures that create or emphasise an us vs. them situation and make ingroup/ outgroup behaviour more likely: interacting and communicating are important tactical tools in this respect. When violence does occur, it is vitally important to act in a timely fashion rather than waiting for situations to escalate and get out of hand and to do this in a focused and targeted way, aimed specifically at those individuals transgressing limits. These strategic and tactical principles fit very well with the four principles for crowd policing as formulated by Reicher, Stott et al. (2004; 2007).

So far, the results of the study have inspired several practical applications. On the occasion of the Euro summit organised during the Dutch EU-presidency in 1997 the Amsterdam police

formed what they called a “peace unit”: a unit composed of some 40 uniformed officers who were specifically trained to engage protesters by communicating with them. This unit, which still exists, is frequently used in all types of situations of tension where it makes an important contribution to preventing disorder. Although in line with the findings of the study, it cannot be claimed that the formation of this “dialogue unit” is a direct result of the study, especially as it was in line with previous experiences and experiments in the Netherlands (see e.g. IJzerman, 1982).

A more direct line exists between the results of the study and police preparations for the European football championships Euro 2000 held in the Netherlands and Belgium. On the basis of the findings of the study and the practical expertise of the officers involved in the binational police project preparing for Euro 2000, a “Police behavioural profile Euro 2000” was drawn up and adopted by authorities to bring about an equal influence on the behaviour of visitors in the different host cities. At the core of this profile was the idea that a *friendly but firm* low profile approach would be most suitable. Adang (2001) and Adang & Cuvelier (2001) reported the results of the research into the implementation of the behavioural profile in all host cities and could demonstrate the effectiveness of the friendly and firm low profile approach. Characteristic of the “low profile” approach were a substantial, but limited number of police officers in daily uniform, patrolling in pairs or small groups, interacting with fans. These interactions were friendly, but transgressions by fans were responded to quickly. In the low profile approach, police deployment was based more on intelligence and on information provided by spotters’ teams. For the contrasting “high profile” approach more than three times as many officers were visible in the streets. These officers were more often dressed in riot gear and accompanied by their riot vehicles; they formed larger groups, which made it less easy to approach them. It is important to note that the distinction made here is much more subtle than the distinction between paramilitary and non-paramilitary styles of public order maintenance (Jefferson, 1987; 1990; Waddington, 1987; 1993). In both “high profile” and “low profile” approaches, a clear command and control structure was in place and use could be made of intervention units with riot gear. To varying degrees, these experiences were later used during Euro 2004 in Portugal (Stott, Adang et al., 2007,;2008), the World Cup 2006 held in Germany (Schreiber & Adang, 2009) and Euro 2008 held in Austria and Switzerland (Adang & Brown, 2008).

The study was relevant in other practical applications as well. The city of Arnhem in the Netherlands was one of the Euro 2000 host cities. For the tournament, police in Arnhem had paid specific attention to the quality of information gathering and to information analysis. Following the tournament, starting in 2002, police in Arnhem took initiatives to improve their information management and intelligence in relation to football violence. Using knowledge about the young male syndrome and the fact that violent football offenders are more likely to be violent on other occasions as well, they gathered and analysed targeted information to be able to better identify individuals and groups involved in instigating violent incidents. However, the approach was not just a traditional “hooligan” approach aimed at repression. From the start, the aim was to make possible a more tailor made approach to the policing of fans, both at an individual and at a group level. In this way, police in Arnhem was less often surprised by sudden incidents, was able to deploy less police (and especially less riot police) around football matches and to make more “better” arrests (in the sense that arrests more often led to successful prosecution). At the individual level, in cooperation with club and youth workers, specific approaches were developed to encourage individuals to refrain from involvement in violence (Ferwerda & Adang, 2005). Applied in pilot form in

three other forces, the methodology has subsequently been implemented in all Dutch police forces.

Another offshoot of the study was the development of peer review evaluation teams (Adang, 2006; Adang & Brown, 2008), which are currently being deployed on request in several countries across Europe. The idea of a peer review evaluation team is to involve, under scientific guidance, experienced police officers from several countries to observe police operations in real time and provide feedback. Not to blame, but to exchange and to learn, creating a win-win situation in which both requesting police forces and participating reviewers gain something and more general lessons for public order management can be drawn as well. An explicit goal of the peer review evaluation teams is to increase the application of theory into practice and the continued development of theory based on practical experiences and field work.

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