



Phase One Interim Report Summary: Empirical Observations & Analysis

Enabling an Evidence Based Approach to Crowd Safety and Security in Swedish Football

INTRODUCTION

ENABLE is project that draws together an international network of key stakeholders and experts in football safety and security. The primary task of the project has been to undertake a programme of evidence gathering in order to analyse, identify and share good practice in the management of crowds attending Swedish Professional Football matches. ENABLE has

undertaken systematic observations of the safety and security operations surrounding a series of 'high' risk fixtures in Sweden. Two of these were in Stockholm and one in Gothenburg. ENABLE will conduct another two observations before concluding Phase 1 of its development in late 2015. To facilitate dissemination, discussion and learning we have provided this interim report, which focuses in detail on two of our first three observations, but also bases its preliminary conclusions on data from the third. The background theoretical context for this work draws extensively on the Elaborated Social Identity Model of crowd behaviour (ESIM) which is the theoretical model underpinning the Special Police Tactic (SPT).

Our observations involved multiple stakeholders drawn from our key partners. These included academics, police officers, stadium safety and security officials, fan representatives and SLOs from Sweden, Denmark and the UK. For each observation the teams were drawn together on the day of the fixture. They were supported by the host police force and club had access to all aspects of the operation both inside and outside of stadia. The teams worked in small groups attending briefings, interviewing participants and making observations across the operational footprint of the event. They would pay particular attention to areas where fans gathered and focus on any issue that were of significance to the police or the research goals of the project. The team was drawn together the following day where extensive discussion was undertaken focused on drawing out and triangulating the data so that we were able to gain a clear and objective account of the nature of the event as this related to safety and security issues. During these discussions the team then began to develop some preliminary theoretical analysis of the implications and significance of these events for operationally relevant issues. These discussions were recorded and then revisited for further analysis. This latter analysis forms the structure of the report set out below.

Preliminary considerations

While our findings at this stage are preliminary we feel that it would be useful to draw out the following considerations. There is a clear and obvious commitment among police commanders and staff in Gothenburg and Stockholm to the police national strategy for facilitation, dialogue and graded tactical deployment. This commitment is delivering good practice in relationship to the effective management of risk to public order in the context of the observed events. The study raises some preliminary issues regarding the delivery of a liaison-based approach, which we outline here:

- Maintaining graded tactical deployment, which is by definition dependent upon ensuring the presence of a communication capability, is difficult in situations defined by police as high risk. In such scenarios there is an obvious capability to escalate police tactical profile but a less evident capability to deescalate.

- There is variability in the approach adopted by police in different cities toward supporter engagement. While one city divides criminal intelligence and liaison functions another combines these in a single unit. There is some requirement to consider the viability of local variability in supporter engagement under a single national strategic and organisational approach.
- Liaison based public order policing is built around the development of police competencies. These competencies are currently being delivered in various forms in the Swedish context and this variability appears confusing. In terms of supporter engagement there are Evenemangs police, spotters, Event police, and Supporter police. Each of these roles displays different competencies and skills.
- The new Event police concept is in early development but appears to add to the graded concept. However, there is currently a lack of clarity leading to confusion among police staff and fans about the nature of the role. The units have little if anything in the way of specific training and were, in our observation, put together in a relatively piecemeal fashion. There was no clear match between skills and roles. Given the confusion and resistance to this change the unit's development might benefit from a clear programme of communication, both internally and externally, and a coherent structured process of change management.
- The study suggests the Evenemangs police can play an important function in building relationships of trust and confidence with fans - both 'risk' and 'non-risk'. Their consistent deployment across events combined with a capacity to operate with high levels of discretion appears to improve dynamic risk assessment and police capability for dialogue-based solutions to risk management.
- The deployment of Evenemangs police is consistent with national strategy – both specifically to football and more generally to the SPT - and with respect to crowd theory. The function they provide and associated outcomes are consistent with research and international good practice. Their operational deployment appears to compliment rather than undermine any criminal intelligence capability delivered by 'spotters'. It therefore remains unclear why similar units have not been developed elsewhere.
- There is a prima facie case that 'supporter police' struggle to construct and maintain consistently positive relationships with those groups who regularly present 'risk'. There are clear indicators of antagonistic relationships with some supporters, particularly those that might pose spontaneous (as opposed to premeditated) risk to public order. Their capability to assist in the management of risk appears to be

limited to providing a surveillance, intelligence and deterrence function similar to that provided by 'spotters'.

- Swedish fan culture has a specific form the nature of which will continue to present police with scenarios of risk on an on-going basis for the foreseeable future. It is evident that a fuller understanding of that culture and its underlying values and symbolic interactions will assist police to comprehend and predict risk and therefore empower them to create efficiencies and capability to promote among fans 'self-regulation' in otherwise 'high-risk' situations.
- The effective management of 'risk' in the football context in Sweden is not merely an issue for the police. In particular it appears to be linked to the presence of a particular model of 'Supporter Liaison Officer', focused around conflict prevention and de-escalation. This SLO role is one funded by the football club and therefore represents the importance of a strategic investment by football clubs in providing this function across the Swedish context. It appears to be critically important that SLOs work to a particular code of ethical conduct, operate with high levels of discretion, have credibility among fans (including those that present risk) but also an effective working relationship with the police. Such relationships can be empowered if they are mediated through Evenemangs police. It may be useful to have more than one SLO in the same club with different specialisms in this respect.
- It is evident that some clubs and fan groups in Sweden do not have effective channels of dialogue with police. This study suggests that where such channels do not exist that it is important for both the police and the relevant clubs to invest in overcoming existing barriers to effective communication. This is precisely the challenge confronted by Dialogue police in the protest context, which therefore suggests that Evenemangs police could undertake this role with support from senior colleagues. Any such investment should be matched by a parallel development among clubs of their SLO function.
- It is evident that the partnership model achieved with respect to specific clubs in Stockholm is particularly effective. The selection of a cadre of experienced public order commanders committed to the national concepts combines well with the SLO function and strategic investment in Evenemangs police. This model appears to be capable of creating effective channels of communication and enables a structured commitment to and delivery of a facilitation and liaison-based approach that can be maintained even in high-risk scenarios both inside and outside Stockholm.
- The overwhelming focus in this context is on the management of threats to public order. However, substantial risk was evident on a number of occasions with respect

to public safety. There should be strategic consideration given to public safety issues some of which relate to the management of crowds in transport hubs and inside stadiums. This does require clubs to address their stewarding arrangements and protocols regarding safe capacity. There is also some requirement to address the role, function and command structure of the ordningsvakten.

- There is an apparent de facto decriminalisation of the use of pyro technics inside stadiums. In particular the organised displays, combined with poor crowd management practices inside stadiums, are potentially posing a threat to public safety. The current situation of criminalisation is not effective and appears to make little if any impact on pyro-technic use. It may be helpful to address the issue in terms of a Health and Safety response that could work to facilitate the development of safe practice in the use of pyro.

[Download the full interim report here](#)

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