Communication as the most important Police Strategy at the Football World Cup Final 2006

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Abstract

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In 2006 a group of Swedish researchers from Linköping University observed a high-risk match during the Football World-Cup Finals in Germany. The match between Germany and Poland took place in Dortmund, and during the entire day observations were performed at different locations in the city [cf. Granström & Hylander (2008), Guvå & Rosander (2008), Hau & Näslund (2008)].

In this report, information is summarised that focuses on the strategies and tactics of the police in Dortmund for this match as well as for the entire World championship tournament. Data was gathered by interviews with police officers in Dortmund and Frankfurt/Main, Germany. The purpose of this presentation is to account for police strategies and considerations that resulted in a mainly peaceful and orderly major football event.
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Background

About two months before the World Championship Final, contacts were made to the German police in Frankfurt and to the Police headquarters in Dortmund\(^1\). A telephone interview was performed with the responsible officer in Frankfurt for the organisation of police actions in the city. It became clear that the police in the different states of Germany shared a general approach of preparation. However, local special characteristics forced them to adapt the strategy to the different local situations in the various cities, depending on geographic, architectural, infrastructural, and other risk factors, e.g. depending on the different matches. The overall strategy was orientated toward the motto of the championship: ‘A time to make friends’. The police should therefore perform in as friendly, communicative and open a manner as possible. Only if dangerous situations were about to develop should the police perform strict and professional actions. Police presence in the cities should be kept to a minimum, showing no behaviour that might be interpreted by fans as provocative.

Part of the police strategy in the city of Frankfurt was to keep the fans separate when they approached the stadium. In contrast to this, the strategy in Dortmund was a different one. Here the police tried to allow the fans meet before the match under controllable conditions.

In that which follows, the police strategy of the city of Dortmund is described more thoroughly as a successful example of an applied peace-keeping strategy. The aim is simply to present the information, and not to comment or to relate to theoretical models (cf. Guvå & Rosander 2008).

A formal application to support the research of the team from Linköping University found a positive response from the Dortmund police. The police were informed about the research plan, and at what time the group wanted to observe the activities before during and after the match of Germany against Poland on the 14\(^{th}\) of June 2006. The police gave suggestions as to where fans might gather in the city and about locations

\(^1\) I would like to express special thanks to Uwe Thieme, Polizeidirektor at the police headquarters in Dortmund, and his colleagues for the opportunity to gain insight into their work, and for their openness and patience.
to observe. It was agreed that the police would meet a member of the research team after the tournament had ended in order to perform an interview about police strategies and police actions during the world championship tournament.

In March 2007 a three hour interview was conducted in Dortmund. In this interview with the chief of Police headquarters, not only special strategies for the high-risk match in Dortmund were discussed but also the overall activities of the Dortmund police as well as of German police more generally were described. In what follows, a summary of this interview is given, structured by eleven main questions about general police-tactic/-strategy, definition of risk groups, how information about risk groups was collected, how the police prepared, about functions of different police forces, which scenarios of threat were developed, which actions were taken on match day, and which experiences were used from German Bundesliga matches.

**General strategy: The Permanent Staff**

In the German federal state of Nordrhein-Westfalen six so-called ‘Permanent Staffs’ exist within the police force. They have the order to deal with all kinds of possible crises (e.g. hostage taking, blackmail, kidnapping, terror attacks, disasters). Each Permanent Staff consists of 10 advisors; all of them specially educated police of long service, and one police director. This is a very unusual structure because usually a police director has responsibility for about 300 employees. In Germany only two other federal states have this kind of unit. The aim of each Permanent Staff is to deliver ‘high quality’ police work.

An order the staff received in late 2002 was to prepare for the Football World Championship tournament in 2006. From the end of 2002 this project was conducted in different smaller working groups that each took responsibility for parts of the entire problem. In each group a member of the Permanent Staff was present in order to gain a general overview of the progress of the preparation. In March 2006, work in the preparation groups was finished. That was the time when the final preparation phase for the police actions started. In fact, from that time on all knowledge and
information prepared in the different groups had to be accessible for the Permanent Staff, which worked ‘excellently’, according to the chief of Dortmund police.

All technical preconditions were given: a High Command centre for a 35 member group, representing all relevant units of the police, fire fighters, rescue workers, etc. was installed. The table they were working at was produced in a special shape enabling easy communication processes. On five big whiteboards all information was permanently accessible. Older content was photographed, scanned and made accessible through the lab-top network that each working place at the table was equipped with. The aim was that all members of the High Command should have the same information, a similar picture of the situation at any time. This room was for many members of the High Command; a ‘second home for four weeks’.

**Communication as a tool**

The general strategy of the Permanent Staff in Dortmund was to develop tools of communication with the fans. The insight that communication is the most important tool of action for the police was based on more than 25 years experience with the hooligans of Borussia Dortmund, the local football club, which plays Bundesliga matches in an arena built for 81,000 spectators. In the 1980s, hooligans came to Dortmund every fortnight, international matches not included. They were influenced by extreme right wing party thoughts which raised the question for the police of how to deal with these Hooligans. One strategy was to make contact with these groups in a controlled and intentional way.

While in other cities the idea still exists that one has to separate and select fans, Dortmund police are convinced that this concept does not work. If it is not possible to completely separate the fan groups over the entire period while they are in the city. A short moment might be enough and the fans would take the chance to meet and use the situation to start to fight. On the other hand, if ‘they had drunk a couple of beers together likelihood that they will automatically start to fight is decreased.
This was the basic idea behind the concept the Dortmund police developed: a so-called ‘Fan-Treff-Aktion’ strategy (fan–meeting events) in the 1980s. This program was financed by the local football club and by the City of Dortmund. Meanwhile the fan-meeting events are acknowledged and supported by the European Football Association (UEFA) as an excellent instrument of fan support. Large open places in the city like Alter Markt, Friedensplatz or Willy Brand Platz were chosen where the fans could meet. Bands affiliated to the different football clubs that played that very evening performed and people listened to the concerts, ate, got food, drank beer, and had the chance to spend some time together in an attractive way until the match started later in the evening. On these occasions the fans could meet under controlled circumstances. They could party together and had the chance to get to know each other. At the same time, police officers mingled together with the fans.

**De-escalation tactics**

Hitherto, Dortmund police had arranged such fan meeting events dozens of times and the experiences had been positive. Only one match in the past was seen as critical: Borussia Dortmund met Ajax Amsterdam in the 1995/96 season of the European Champions league, but the police managed the situation. Even though police went to the places where the fans were, wearing scarves in the colours of the different clubs, it was extremely important that *only a few* police were present, thus, signalling, ‘we are here but our prime intention is to be communicative’, so that 4-6 police celebrated with the fans. ‘We wanted to tell them: “we see you as peaceful fans as long as you do not show the opposite. As long as you are peaceful the police will respond peacefully.” With this general attitude we have got good experiences so far.’

The police kept a low profile before, during and after the match, in the city as well as in the stadium. A flexible response strategy by the police existed, depending on how a situation developed. The overall ideal is a fair-minded police, demonstrating flexible behaviour, reacting on different grades of threat. The general attitude was open,

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2 All quotations are cited from the interview material obtained at the police headquarters in Dortmund.
communicative, friendly and non-paranoid, which meant that every person was seen primarily as peaceful unless the behaviour did not prove the opposite. However, if criminal behaviour was observed the police would react immediately and take consequent action against offenders.

The Permanent Staff was convinced that there are feedback-loops between how the police act and the reactions of the fans. Thus, the presence was graded. Bundesliga matches are normal football events for Dortmund police. The systematic use of the experience of Bundesliga matches had been performed since the 1980s. The main strategy for Dortmund police when meeting football fans was de-escalation. ‘Our trademark is the white cap,’ which is part of the everyday uniform of a policeman. The police entered the stadium wearing normal uniforms. The police had no helmets, no batons; they wore just normal jackets and their white caps. ‘We are able to control 20,000 fans with 5-6 policemen, wearing their white caps.’

However, there was a lot of work necessary to carry out behind the stage. All Bundesliga matches are video controlled. If someone uses fireworks, the police can produce printouts of high-resolution video pictures that show clearly the person who committed the crime. With these printouts, 3-4 police enter the gallery with the football fans and make their way through the crowd, guided by radio transmitter from the control centre. Experience of Dortmund police shows that by using this tactic it is possible to arrest the offender. If fans ask aggressively: ‘What do you want here?’ the police show the printed photos, explain the dangerous situation and tell them that they have to arrest this person. Normally, the fans accept this procedure. When the police approach the person, they put a hand on the shoulder of the person and the command post gives feedback: ‘Yes, this is the person’. Thus, by just staying calm, explaining, being communicative, and moving slowly, without using batons or helmets, it becomes possible to arrest offenders and take them out of a critical area. Hence the police receive acceptance from all the other football fans.

The police use uniforms that look like normal uniforms for everyday situations. Helmets are left in the car’, because helmets could signal to the fans that the police
expect riots. ‘That is what we do not want. We want to signal: “You are seen as peaceful guests until you behave differently’. In the view of Dortmund police, this is an example of successful de-escalation tactics. Not to display strong power, but being communicative and informing the fans about what the police are doing is seen as a much more successful and a less dangerous way for the police to act. ‘We try to care about the fans actively.’

‘We have had matches with 80,000 spectators with not more than 100 police at the stadium, 20 of them were regulating traffic. It is enough to place five or six police on the lower end of a gallery with 20,000 fans.’

‘Previously there were high fences around the football ground. We always wondered why there were no fences in the stadiums in England. In the end we decided to deconstruct the fences. By taking away the fences we signalled a kind of trust toward the fans. “We see you as people that do not have to be fenced” and this has a calming effect. People understood that the police perceived them as peaceful and they tried to meet this expectance. The majority are peaceful fans.’

However, if the undercover police or those that have contacts with the hooligan scene signal that ‘something is planned’, the police officers prepare the interventions at the stadium differently. Then, the police use special protective waistcoats that they wear underneath the uniform. In these situations the police officers take their helmets with them. But even in such a critical situation communication remains important. ‘Communication is the most important tool we have. We talk with the fans about everything, even about the most stupid topics. That is important! In responding like this, the police get more acceptance by the fans.’

Adapting to the situation, the police show a low profile of presence. However, once a crime is committed, police forces act immediately, very strictly and effectively. ‘Football fans are very sensible to what is justified and what is not. Our actions should be fair. If the fans are aware that the police are is strict but fair-minded you can communicate with them, then we can be successful in our work.’
This was the basic idea the police made use of for the World Championship. They wanted to create controllable meeting places for the fans that made the police work easier. Otherwise the police feared to have several dozens of conflicts in bars throughout the city. It was seen as a higher risk of anonymity, fights, and conflicts when fans are spreading over the city. ‘We needed a frame’.

**Definition of risk groups**

The Police in Dortmund based their strategies on a model that differentiates three categories of fans:

- Category A: Fans are peaceful
- Category B: Fans are situationally violent
- Category C: Fans are violent

Category A fans include the general football supporter who observe a match (probably together with family or friends) for enjoyment. Category B fans are best described as highly committed to their club and having the potential to become aggressive in specific group-situations (e.g. when being provoked or when unfairly treated). Category C fans actually are not real fans because they do not necessarily watch the match but only follow ‘their’ team in order to get involved into fights that could take place far from the stadium. Hooligans are typical for this group, but this category also includes persons that were eventually registered in the so-called ‘offender-file-sports’, a national database of all individuals who committed crimes in the context of sport events.

Fights between hooligans are almost always pre-arranged. The hooligans of both sides agree where and when they shall meet. Very rarely is the frame arbitrary. There has to be an enemy, in case of necessity this could also be the police. Real hooligans are not interested in what is going on at the arena; they are interested in the public viewing areas where the matches are broadcasted for those having no tickets.
'There is always a history connected to a specific fan-group one should be aware of, a history and an actual context, e.g. German – British fans have a special history as well as Schalke – Dortmund fans. Often, just a small spark is needed and the entire mixture ignites.' On the other hand it is astounding that fans seem to know exactly what is possible and what is not when being confronted with the police, nationally as well as internationally. Hooligans are very well informed about laws, limits and boundaries in different countries.'

**Possible actions that the police apply when being confronted**

Being confronted with fans of comprising categories A and B, police behaviour is supposed to be ‘humanly, friendly, and responsive’. However, when meeting fans belonging to the category C, police are supposed to act firmly but friendly. The idea is, not to lose composure but at the same time demonstrate clear authority.

'Important for the police forces is a unified use of language. If there was information transmitted: “On Alter Markt there are Polish fans, group size 120, category C”, everyone was aware about the situation and could interpret the message correctly. Then we have to show presence, because this group consists not of normal football fans, but they are offenders who are looking for fights.'

Another tactic the police applied was to actively address and speak with individual possible offenders: ‘Hey. We know you and we observe you on our screens the entire day. If you do anything outside the range of what is accepted, we will arrest you.'

Still another strategy was constraints for individuals to report at police stations. People without tickets and who were suspected to be possible offenders had to report up to three times during the day at certain police stations. Thus, they could not get to the stadium. An additional factor was that the constraints had an effect also as to other fans. ‘Fans communicate this and category B fans might rethink whether they take the risk to be included in the ‘sports event offender file’ of the police, which means interdiction to enter any stadium in Germany over a two year period. Then it is no longer possible to be in a group, and that is no fun for most of them'.
The strategy set also included permanent groups and tasks, which means that the police forces acted in fixed groups. They had the same things to do during the entire tournament. Therefore, they developed competence, routines, and felt secure in what they were doing. As a result, they performed differently, more calmly and in a more professional way. During the interview this fact was compared to the events in Copenhagen (riots in the context of an eviction of a youth centre) where the police would not have acted professionally.

Police who have a lot of experiences when working in the field of football matches know how to assess the fans. They have the competence and they know how to act; they can stay calm and take the situation easily when inexperienced police officers start to get nervous. If the police perform calmly, more general acceptance is achieved among the fans.

Functions of different police forces

Different types of police forces were present in order to guarantee the utmost flexibility when responding. Official experts of the hooligan groups of both countries (Poland and Germany) were involved that day in order to identify possible offenders (reconnaissance) beforehand. At the same time civil forces were placed at different locations in the city. Nevertheless, the police was aware of the fact that hooligans had their own reconnaissance network (e.g. by mobile phones or via SMS).

The five different types of uniformed police can be described as follows:

- **Information forces**: officers who know the groups of fans, who have contact with the clubs, and who can identify ‘problem fans’; they include Polish officials.
- **Security forces** for specific areas, so called ‘Presence Forces’, wearing usual police officer uniforms (yellow).
- **Mobile squads** with or without special body protection. They were to protect large geographical areas (dark greenish uniforms, with berets).
• **Special operation forces** (SEK, black uniforms), for dangerous situations (e.g. Alter Markt), that operate forcefully, quickly and professionally when riots occur. It is seen as an absolute exception to make use of the Special Operation Forces against ringleaders, because these Special Forces are trained to handle heavy criminals. Dressed completely in black uniforms they work professionally and quickly: ‘If they see Special Operation Forces the fans know exactly and for 100%: now it is getting serious.’ There was one incident at Alter Markt during the match day when these forces were in operation for about 15 minutes. ‘This operation also had a calming effect on the other fans. We arrested about 430 persons either because of criminal acts or because of averting of danger.’
• **Communication forces** (e.g. ‘theatre’ police), trying to assist and to communicate.

On June 14th, about 3,000 police were concentrated in the city (during the rest of the tournament a little more than 2,000). They had to deal with more than 200,000 visitors spread throughout the city. The numbers of visitors at the stadium and at the ‘public viewing areas’ were as follows: Westfalenstadion: 56,000, Westfalenhalle: 10,000, and Friedensplatz: 12,000.

The operational plan could be summarised as follows: **no affrays, no punch-ups, a professional appearance, quickly detain hooligans.** The police were aware of the fact, that every action has an effect on non-involved spectators – i.e. on the observing category B and C fans. Therefore, a low profile was chosen: The police moved through the city only in small groups, sometimes in ordinary cars. Police officers were supposed to perform professionally from the moment they leave their cars. This is considered as having a general preventive effect on others observing them.

In the event of riots, it is seen as useless just to separate the different groups. ‘There is no use in just separating two conflict parties. On the contrary, this is only stimulating. They will claim ‘we have fought well, we also received some hits, but the police didn’t catch us, we will meet next weekend again.’ This is an effect we do not ask for. That is why we are acting firmly, which includes arrests and complaints. As
far as hooligans are concerned, the level of starting to act is pretty low for the police, which include quick arrests. Not until after the match are most of the arrested persons free again. Thus, the situation in the stadium and in the city remains quiet during the match. If all suspected ringleaders are arrested, the situation will be calm during the match’.

As Dortmund police had information about Polish hooligans being on their way to the city, police controls were already established on all roads entering Dortmund the night before the match. On the one hand it was the aim to demonstrate presence and on the other hand the police tried not to exaggerate the importance of the hooligans by excessive presence of police forces on match day (as it was supposed also to be an important match from a hooligan’s perspective). The train arriving from Poland was especially controlled, in cooperation with the German federal police who is responsible for trains and train-stations. Dortmund police was well informed about who were on board the trains.

**Preparations**

*Cooperation with colleagues from Poland*

There was intensive cooperation with colleagues from the Polish police. Some 20-30 Polish police officers were in Dortmund during match day. They supplied advance information, above all about well-known hooligans. Some of the police officers were just in the city to serve as contact persons for the Polish fans. They tried to answer questions and give the best help possible. It was taken into account that other supporters would observe these contacts and spread their impressions, valuing what they had seen. During all critical phases, Polish colleagues patrolling in the city of Dortmund could immediately tell the number of category C fans in different restaurants and bars and if the situation was about to become critical or dangerous.
Cooperation with colleagues from Germany

Police operations were supported by information from ZIS = Zentrale Informationsstelle Sporteinsätze, (Information Centre for Sport Operations). This authority collects information about all sport events i.e. also events in which Polish and English fans were participating and that took place before June 14th. The authority checks information from foreign countries, assembles and assesses it, before writing summaries of relevant information. By using this source, important information was gained about former fan behaviours, about risk groups and their history, as well as about experiences gained from former police actions.

Cooperation with other authorities

The police had close cooperation with the local fire fighters of the city of Dortmund, the emergency personal (which were the German Red Cross, the Arbeiter Samariter Bund (ASB) and others), the traffic control authority of the City of Dortmund, and other institutions relevant for the successful accomplishment of all procedures and specific actions.

Cooperation at locations on match day

The police received constant information from several helicopters that were equipped with special cameras for high-enlargement pictures. With the help of these films the police could trace fleeing hooligans. These pictures were shared with other authorities. All information was collected in the central control room and forwarded to the leaders of the different sections. It was of most importance to share an overall picture, to gain an overview. (However, the police was aware of the fact that a helicopter can also be experienced as disturbing because of the high level of noise). Police were also in permanent contact with the security forces at the public viewing areas, with the fire fighters and the rescue workers.
Cooperation with a security company

A private company was chosen to perform security services at the public viewing areas, Friedensplatz and Westfalenhalle. The operation was coordinated with the city of Dortmund. The police did not want body-builders as security personal, but normal people who could act in a friendly and communicative way. The concept of ‘A time to make friends’ should also be understood by these security personnel. The employees of the private company were instructed according to the guidelines developed by Dortmund police (general attitude of openness, communicativeness, friendliness). Furthermore the company was expected to deliver professional communication and contact possibilities for the police.

In outcome, Dortmund police was very satisfied with the performance of this company, and this was be confirmed by our observations at the entrance controls to Friedensplatz.

Another source of information was from video cameras. Friedensplatz was continuously (video) controlled. The police made use of the experiences of Bundesliga matches. There had to be a permanently free passage for fire fighter’s trucks, which limited the number of spectators on the place. In the event of an emergency, and based on the video material, Dortmund police could decide to shut down the entrances to the Friedensplatz in cooperation with authorities of the city of Dortmund and with the fire fighters.

Worst-case scenarios

One of the main tasks of the ‘Permanent staff’ was to make tentative predictions beforehand, in order to be prepared for all possible eventualities. Besides developing the scenario of a peaceful football match, it is necessary to be open to the possibility for worst-case scenarios. The idea behind this is to be prepared for all possible cases and not to lose control, i.e. not to act emotionally or spontaneously without thinking. The situation for June 14th could be described as follows: ‘We had three matches during the day. We had to be aware what happens in the other stadiums. It would have been a problem if Germany had met Poland in the stadium while England met
Italy in another city and the later match had been broadcast on the big screens. Germans and Polish fans do not like each other and the same is true for English and Italian fans. We developed these kinds of different scenarios.'

Examples of other scenarios that were prepared for are: collapse of a stadium roof; plane crash, terror attacks, cloudbursts of rain with flooding, thunderstorms. Possible terror attacks were in particular seen as a serious threat because bombs were found in German railway stations, hidden in suitcases and intended to explode during the tournament.

When 3000 journalists are reporting, it is a highly attractive situation for terrorists. What was also planned was how to react and change as quickly as possible the operational structures in the case of such an event. 'That’s why we had Special Forces around. Even though we normally do not make use of these Special Forces. They only de-motivate the other local police forces and enhance the prestige of the hooligans.'

**Information processing**

Information about risk groups was exclusively supplied by ZIS (central information authority for sport events). For the Permanent Staff the Internet was not seen as a relevant source of information. The Internet is especially observed by ‘spotters’ and by the Zentrale Informationsstelle Sport (ZIS), which collect and provide information. All Information coming from the Internet has to be crosschecked. As far as June 14th was concerned, the police did also use information obtained from the Internet when working out the operational plans. However, the most important resource was the information supplied by the Polish police.

Information about strategies, tactics, insight concerning risk groups, etc. was conveyed before the World Championship Finals by courses and permanently during the match-days to the on-site action. In addition, special courses were conducted on how to handle larger groups. ‘Only what one has trained for can one perform later in
reality. We had guidelines and manuals. Everyone was aware of how the operation was planned.

Courses, seminars, information leaflets, manuals, and the internal network of the police were used in order to support good ‘internal public relation’. In order to supply information to foreign guests, an evaluation was performed among the police staff in the city on foreign language competences. A 24-hour catering service was arranged, including a breakfast buffet. There was mobile catering available to the police forces. As a first step, the basic needs were arranged for all staff for the entire tournament. In a second step what was needed in the specific areas was estimated, calculated and ordered (e.g.: How many police? At which place are they working? What are they there to do? What do they need?). A central aim was that police officers should identify with their work during the championship. They should develop a ‘we’ feeling. Good food was seen as a basic factor in achieving this positive identification. In addition, signing out for being off-duty was possible and handled as flexibly as possible (e.g. when a child became sick, when having problems at home, etc.).

Another important aspect of information policy was ‘internal public relations’. Everybody who was involved in police actions should be informed about the overall situation and the reasons for a certain order. This was seen as very crucial for successful actions. All police forces had to be informed about the relevant events during the day. The aim was that everyone at any time should know what was happening, in order to understand the reason for what they were expected to do. Immediately after an operation the police officers were giving feedback. Then the leaders could approve the operation. In addition, every police officer could give his/her feedback, comments or suggestions individually via the intranet. All experiences were also discussed with the Special Forces.

Daily debriefings were performed in order to evaluate police actions. This is a routine procedure for all police operations in Nordrhein-Westfalen, before a second expert evaluation. In both cases the evaluation results were reported as being ‘excellent’. The outcome of these evaluations was transferred to the media as well as a
summary of all events during the entire time-period of the championship tournament, including statistical material. In general, police operations found approval with the media and the public.

There was also international interest in the police work: In Dortmund the police had contacts with the police of all nations participating in the tournament. In addition there were guests and observers from Saudi-Arabia, Switzerland, Austria, and South Africa. Switzerland and Austria were to organise the European Championship tournament in 2008, South Africa is to be the host of the World Championship in 2010.

**Match-day events**

‘We had a complex operation concept during the world championship. The match Germany against Poland was the big exception. We had wonderful times in the fan areas, e.g. during the Sweden match when we left our control room and enjoyed the atmosphere. It is very rare that in the run-up to the match so much interest of the media can be registered. In this case its interest focused on violent Polish hooligans. Maybe the media has pushed the German fans to react, and they had to defend their ‘hooligan-honour’. The media have a lot of responsibility, as they think violence sells. As early as in the morning, police colleagues reported a strange atmosphere on June 14th. There was some tension; the fans were not as relaxed as usual.’

Concerning police actions, the main strategy was to keep a low profile. ‘We do not want wild fights; the result is negative media reaction. We act quickly, arrest the fans down on the ground. That is seen as professional action. Police patrols were connected with the control room. “Spotters” were out in the city, reporting immediately when they saw category C fans. They followed these groups, even when the groups split, in order to neutralise them’.

‘We also have small, mobile units, driving around in normal cars. This has a preventive function because also the Hooligans communicate, have their own
information system. They gathered on Alter Markt in a very short time phase. If the police would not have reacted quickly, this might have had negative effects. But if the police act quickly, the hooligans see that the police are ready. They are not stupid. They consider whether it is worth to take the risk.’

The match had a high value within the hooligan scene, for the ‘hooligan ranking’. The evening before the match, hooligan reconnaissance elements came to Dortmund, checking the situation. The police were present, and had set up controls on every road into the city. This was a ‘strong signal’ from the police and ‘several hooligans did not continue to Dortmund.’

It is seen as important to remove the anonymity of people, so as to be able to threaten them with consequences. ‘Except for half an hour at Alter Markt, we succeeded with building up some pressure of presence. All remained calm.’ As far as Alter Markt was concerned, spotters went into the bars and restaurants and searched systematically for Polish and German hooligans. They realised within a very short period of time when more than 100 category C fans had gathered. This group of category C fans had not been there a few minutes earlier. Not only the German spotters reported that these fans were dangerous, but the Polish spotters confirmed this assessment.

‘When there is such concrete information, the police must act immediately. Otherwise there is a risk of heavy fights that develop within a short period of time.’ At Alter Markt it was time to act after the assessment of a critical situation. This meant that the nearest police forces had to perform the action and in this case the Special Forces with their black uniforms were closest. ‘One has to take the general situation into consideration as well. We had information and rumours about big fights that were planned. Thus, the police had to decide to act quicker than if such information had not been available.’

Altogether 432 persons were charged, 20 of them were taken in custody. The remainder were freed in small groups during the night. The last person left the police areas at 5 a.m. ‘We changed our tactics during the day. We concentrated on the area
between the stadium and the city centre (via Hohe Strasse). Here the pressure of
presence of police was especially strong. And then came our strongest ‘group of
hundred’: The big rain…” (A heavy thunderstorm late in the evening stopped nearly
all fan activities within minutes.)

The weather was seen as the best helper for the operations that day. It was fine
during the day so that the people could celebrate, but it rained heavily with
thunderstorms after the game in the evening, drastically diminishing the likelihood of
possible clashes between different fan groups. For riots a frame is needed, and an
enemy. Of importance was which fans were identified as offenders during earlier
matches. Those were automatically forbidden by the police to come to the stadium or
to travel to Dortmund.

Conclusions

The information from the interview presented in this report, can, in combination with
the observational studies of Granström & Hylander (2008), Guvå & Rosander (2008),
Hau & Näslund (2008) provide a basis for some assumptions:

1. Mixing of antagonistic fans does not necessarily result in confrontations. On
   the contrary, eating, drinking and singing together seems to support festivity
   and peaceful relations.

2. A large number of heavily equipped police officers are not necessary in order
   to keep law and order. On the contrary, small groups of police, in ordinary
dress and mingling with the fans, seems to support a sense of festivity.

3. A continuous flow of information, and access to food and beverages seems to
   provide good conditions for the police to maintain full control.

4. Security guards called in need to not be body-builders. On the contrary, they
   need to look normal and behave in a friendly and communicative way, thereby
   supporting a relaxed and festival sense.

5. Special information about movements of well-known hooligans needs to be
   spread among the police in order to carry out well-aimed and limited
interventions. The importance of not making mistakes by arresting peaceful supporters seems to be crucial.

References

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