

The Making of Protest and Protest Policing

Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative

Mattias Wahlström

Göteborg Studies in Sociology No 47



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG
DEPT OF SOCIOLOGY

Mattias Wahlström
Department of Sociology
University of Gothenburg
Box 720
SE 405 30 Gothenburg
Sweden
E-mail: mattias.wahlstrom@sociology.gu.se

The Making of Protest and Protest Policing: Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative
Author: Mattias Wahlström
ISBN: 978-91-979397-2-0
Copyright: Mattias Wahlström
Cover design: Mattias Wahlström and Geson Hyltetryck
Cover image: Pieces representing police and demonstrators, used by Swedish and Danish police for planning large public order operations. Arrangement and photography – Mattias Wahlström.
Print: Geson Hyltetryck



Göteborg Studies in Sociology No 47
Department of Sociology, University of Gothenburg

Abstract

Title: The Making of Protest and Protest Policing: Negotiation, Knowledge, Space, and Narrative

Written in English, summary in Swedish. 186 pages.

Author: Mattias Wahlström

Doctoral Dissertation at the Department of Sociology, University of Gothenburg, Box 720, SE 40530 Gothenburg, Sweden

ISSN: 1650-4313

ISBN: 978-91-979397-2-0

Gothenburg 2011

The overall aim of this thesis is to advance our knowledge of the preconditions, processes, and consequences of the interaction between police and political protesters in contemporary Western democracies. Using qualitative analysis of interviews with police officers and political activists, activist Internet forum discussions, and documents produced by police and activists, along with direct observation of protest events and police training in policing tactics, the study seeks to capture the interplay between police and protesters as a continuous process, as opposed to a series of isolated incidents. A better understanding of the dynamics of this process is vital for facilitating vibrant, plural public spaces for deliberation and political representation in a democratic society.

The four studies comprising this dissertation look at events and processes in Denmark and Sweden in 2001 through 2008 – a time period seeing a reform of policing tactics and an upsurge in protest activism in the two countries.

Paper I analyses the communication between the police and activists, including explicit negotiations, both before and during the European Union summits in Gothenburg 2001 and Copenhagen 2002, examining in especial the protesters' initial attitudes towards and subsequent evaluations of this communication. The analysis reveals that the possibilities for achieving sustainable agreements between the two parties were frequently constrained by a mutual lack of trust that made any commitments by the other party seem less than credible. Activists' trust in the police was found to be heavily dependent on the recent history of police behaviour and something not easily influenced by the individual efforts of the negotiating officers. In addition, the different protest performances that various activist groups wanted to stage were found

to be crucial in explaining their attitudes towards communication with the police.

Paper II explores the way in which the Swedish police force works to improve its protest policing practices by trying to reform police knowledge through training and police officers' individual interviews with activists and other counterparts. The discussion centres on the meanings that police officers confer on two organizing concepts framing the reform work – provocation and dialogue – and on the way in which police officers use “reality maintaining” strategies to comprehend activist perspectives without allowing these to fundamentally challenge their own points of view. It is suggested that the current policing style in Sweden, as used also in Denmark, is best conceptualized as proactive management of protests, which captures both the softer and harder aspects of this approach.

Paper III draws upon Henri Lefebvre's theory of production of space to explore how space is produced through protests and protest policing, using a series of annual racist marches and counterdemonstrations as a case study. Conversely, the paper also considers certain key spatial aspects as explanations for how interactions between protesters and police unfolded in the cases concerned. It is argued that territorialization and deterritorialization affecting the boundaries of both physical spaces and the social order constituted the central spatial dimensions of this interaction. The case study, furthermore, illustrates how specific sites for protests can be used as ‘truth-spots’ for movement claims.

Paper IV explores how police provocation and subsequent violence by demonstrators are retroactively constructed in activist milieus in the aftermath of protests. Through an analysis of narratives about protest events as gleaned from interviews and Internet discussion forum discussions, the role of ‘provocation narratives’ in collective evaluation of protest tactics within activist milieus is examined. The analysis reveals how violence is accounted for by using distinct types of plot and particular characters to present the demonstrators as both victims and agents. Accounts of specific episodes of violence during demonstrations were found to theoretically bridge situational and cultural explanations of collective violence.

Keywords: Collective violence, Narrative analysis, Negotiation, Police knowledge, Protest policing, Protest, Provocation, Public Space, Social Movements, Territoriality.

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Paper I

Wahlström, Mattias, and Mikael Oskarsson. 2006. "Negotiating Political Protest in Gothenburg and Copenhagen." Pp. 117-143 in *The Policing of Transnational Protest*, Donatella Della Porta, Abby Peterson and Herbert Reiter, eds. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Paper II

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Paper III

Wahlström, Mattias. 2010. "Producing Spaces for Representation: Racist Marches, Counterdemonstrations, and Public-order Policing." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 28(5): 811-827.

Paper IV

Wahlström, Mattias. 2011. "Taking Control or Losing Control? Activist Narratives of Provocation and Collective Violence." Manuscript under review.

Appendix 1

Observations and interviews

Acknowledgements

To begin with, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Abby Peterson. Thank you for guiding me through this process with your extraordinary dedication, knowledge, support, confidence, and (not least) humour! Thank you also for giving me the means and the encouragement to navigate in the international research arena. It has been a true privilege working with you, and I am glad to be able to continue doing so in our new projects. I also look forward to future joint visits to art exhibitions around Europe!

Thanks to Sven-Åke Lindgren who assisted as supervisor during a period early in the research project, and to Cecilia Hansen-Löfstrand and Håkan Thörn who, in their capacity as reviewers of the manuscript as a whole, provided constructive criticism and advice that was of great help improving the introduction, as well as paper IV. Of course, thanks to Mikael Oskarsson for his contribution to paper I.

Upon presenting papers at department seminars I have received valuable remarks from my commentators: Cathrin Wasshede, Jonas Parsmo, Helena Holgersson, and Björn Halleröd. A special thanks to the participants in the narrative seminar at the department – among others, Christel Backman, Sofia Engström, Cecilia Hansen-Löfstrand, Anna Hedenus, Andreas Gunnarsson, and Karl Malmquist – for stimulating discussions and above all for your advice regarding paper IV.

A good number of other people – colleagues, editors, and teachers – have given me important criticism regarding various papers and helpful advice regarding my research. Among these, I would particularly like to mention Micael Björk, Stuart Elden, Olivier Fillieule, Helena Flam, Pat Gillham, Hank Johnston, Patricia Martin, Don Mitchell, John Noakes, Donatella della Porta, and Herbert Reiter.

During the last years, I have become more accustomed to writing in English than in Swedish. Nevertheless, my papers would not have been what they were without my proof readers. Thank you, Sarah Tarrow, for doing such a good job on paper I! Timo Lyyra language edited papers II, III, IV, and the abstract of this thesis. It deserves emphasizing that Timo is much more than a language editor; he is also a brilliant critic. Thank you Timo, for your relentless demands for clarity!

Thanks to all of you, police officers and political activists, who have spent time being interviewed and accepted me as an observer. Thank you, Anders Svensson and Johannes Brandt for good advice and interesting con-

versations! Among the Swedish police I would like to direct particular thanks for help and advice to Anneli Bergholm-Söder, Hans Lippens, Marianne Hilton, Marianne Håkansson, and Robert Göransson. A special thanks also to Claus Olsen from the Copenhagen police.

A significant amount of travelling has been necessary to carry out observations and interviews, particularly to Stockholm and to Copenhagen. I have also made several journeys to conferences abroad. This has been facilitated by scholarships from the following foundations: Adelbertska Stipendiestiftelsen, Stiftelsen Paul och Marie Berghaus donationsfond, Wilhelm och Martina Lundgrens Vetenskapsfond, Evers och Co's fond for svenske videnskabsmænds studier i Danmark, Stiftelsen Hierta-Retzius stipendiefond, and Letterstedtska Föreningen. Many thanks to relatives and good friends who have generously provided me with somewhere to stay while travelling: Malin and Martin, Gunilla and Yoichi, Titti Johansson, Jakob Sandberg, and my late grandmother Inger Evers.

Thanks to all present and former colleagues at the department! You not only provide a dynamic and inspiring intellectual environment – you also contribute to a pleasant, humorous, and encouraging social environment. Several of you are not only colleagues but also good friends. My only reservation is that our lunch conversations are often so enjoyable that it is difficult to go back to work. Most of the usual suspects are mentioned above. However, I must add Magnus Wennerhag, who in relatively short time has become both a great friend and an important source of intellectual inspiration.

Also thanks to my colleagues among the administrative staff at the department. Anna-Karin Wiberg, Gunilla Gustafsson, and Martina Nyström deserve special mention for their help.

For obvious reasons, neither this thesis nor I would exist were it not for my mother and father. Misse and Leif, special thanks for your unyielding support, as well as our many creative discussions since my childhood that encouraged my curiosity and sharpened my analytic thinking!

Thanks, Bob Fulton for revealing that sociology exists as a discipline, and a remarkably interesting one, on top of that.

Thanks, Ingalill and Peter, for all help and inspiration!

Finally, I want express my heartfelt gratitude to my family for being there, for being you. My beloved Anna, thank you for putting up with me, and for inspiring me to suck out all the marrow of life together with you! You once recommended me to study sociology – now you have to live with that. Elmer and Frej – my wonderful sons – I dedicate this book to you. Please take care, should you become involved in any of the more dangerous kinds of activities discussed in this book.

Introduction

Conflicts in urban space between protesters and representatives of state authority have been a central theme for both politically engaged citizens and police organizations throughout modern history. From a social movement perspective, the police have been one of the main obstacles to surmount for contentious groups that have tried to change politics from outside the corridors of power. Since their invention in the latter half of the 18th century demonstrations have constituted an important component in the protest action repertoire for raising support in controversial political issues, and authorities and other political opponents have frequently tried to suppress them with violent means (Tilly 2003). In the 20th century demonstrations were not only well established in the repertoire of social movements (cf. Tilly 2008), but also became increasingly institutionalized in Western democracies, i.e. more regularized and less often violent (Tarrow and Meyer 1998). As a part of the same process, states and their police forces have realized the advantages of a generally more tolerant approach to protesters. Nonetheless, the police have continued to struggle to make sure that no demonstrators are allowed to pose an immediate threat to dominant political and economic interests, which has also become evident in its selective application of more repressive tactics.

In a number of countries in the world the police still meet virtually all forms of system critical demonstrations with violent repression. However, in most European countries and in North America, protesters can count on a differentiated police response depending on the protest tactics used (Soule and Davenport 2009), or the protest tactics expected by the police. If the police predict that protest will remain orderly and legal, protesters can in turn expect to have good opportunities to express their views (albeit not necessarily where they are heard by the targets of the protest). In what has been alternately called the *negotiated management* style of protest policing (McPhail, Schweingruber, and McCarthy 1998), and *policing by consent* (Waddington 1994), the police normally maintain a benign approach and may even make limited concessions to protester demands, as long as protesters agree to negotiate and adjust to police demands. The dilemma for protesters is that as demonstrations become routine, they tend to receive less attention and risk having very little impact. This is arguably a major reason for some protesters' choice not to comply with predictable and orderly protest, but to become involved in *transgressive contention* (Tilly 2000, see also below) – to protest in innovative ways that risk becoming classified by the police as illegal or disorderly.

This in turn leads to cycles of *tactical interaction* (McAdam 1983) where demonstrators and police (sometimes also counterdemonstrators) compete for the initiative through various tactical inventions. In a wider perspective, the way police and protesters interact in a society has implications for the possibilities of a dynamic civil society as well as urban dwellers' ultimate right to the city (Mitchell 2003).

From a police perspective, dealing with large protest events has played an equally crucial role. Government interest in effectively suppressing the violent protests of the early to mid 19th century appears to have played a decisive role for the development of the modern police force. In Britain, concerns about riots and social disorder were one of the salient themes linked to the creation of modern police (Reiner 1998). It was indeed one of the rationales brought forth by Robert Peel to prove the need for his famous police reform, even though there were multiple motives for, and complex causes of, the creation of the Metropolitan Police (Reiner 2000). In the Swedish case, the difficulties of the city guards to contain the 1848 March riots in Stockholm, with 18 protesters shot to death, appear to have constituted a tipping point in a process that led to an extensive reorganization resulting in a modern Stockholm city police authority (Furuhagen 2004). Presumably, it was not only the ruling classes' fear of a popular uprising itself that contributed to the importance of the 1848 event, but also the character of the policing task. Compared to most other police tasks, large-scale public order policing is a generally much more public and direct measure of the performance of the police. Crowd control failures are therefore less easy to conceal and are more likely to lead to popular criticism and political pressure for reform. As democracy develops in a country, the police self-image becomes closely tied to their protest policing experiences (Winter 1998).

Recent developments in Scandinavia resemble the historical pattern. In May 1993 Danish police in Copenhagen opened fire on demonstrators and wounded at least 11 people. As a result of the ensuing political debates and investigations into the matter, the police decided to reform its training and tactics in relation to large public order operations. This work has had an impact on broader strategic issues for the Danish police, beyond the field of protest policing. Shortly prior to these events, the Danish police, in accordance with the very same tactics that were used in Copenhagen 1993, had trained the Swedish police. Seemingly unaware of the subsequent development in Denmark, the Swedish police retained their tactical concept until, and including, the EU summit in Gothenburg in 2001, where it was their turn to lose control and resort to throwing cobblestones and shooting three people, one with nearly fatal consequences. The investigation and academic criticism

that followed again led to an extensive reform in public order policing in Sweden, with Denmark as its main source of inspiration.

This book presents four studies concerning protest and protest policing in Denmark and Sweden during the 2000s. Apart from their political and cultural resemblance, the two countries are strikingly similar in terms of their developments in protest policing tactics, except for the fact that Danish protest policing has been a step ahead of its Swedish counterpart in the 1990s and early 2000s. The influence that Danish policing had on Swedish reforms in both the 1990s and 2000s makes the Danish case essential for understanding the Swedish policing reforms. The overall aim of this thesis is to advance knowledge of preconditions, processes and consequences of the interaction between police and political protesters in contemporary Western democracies. In practice, this implies research which takes into account not only the interaction between police and protesters *during* demonstrations, but which is also attentive to interaction and reflexive processes that take place *between* events. My empirical and theoretical findings are thus intended to contribute to a conception of the interplay between police and protesters as a continuous process, as opposed to isolated events. Ultimately, knowledge about these dynamics should be appreciated in relation to the importance of maintaining plural and dynamic public spaces for deliberation and political representation in a democratic society.

Paper I analyses how police and activists communicate, and particularly negotiate, before and during the EU summits in Gothenburg and Copenhagen, and examines the protesters' initial attitudes and subsequent evaluations of this communication. The analysis is guided by attention to factors constraining the possibilities for making sustainable agreements, as well as the relationship between communicative strategies and the performances that different groups of protesters want to stage. Trust is analysed as an important precondition for, as well as an outcome of, the interactions between police and protesters.

Paper II reports on a study of how the Swedish police force works to improve protest policing practices by attempting to reform police knowledge through training and police officers' individual interviews with activists and other "counterparts". The discussion centres on the meanings that police officers confer to two organizing concepts of the reform work – provocation and dialogue – as well as how the police officers use "reality maintaining" strategies (Berger and Luckmann 1967) for comprehending activist perspectives while not allowing them to fundamentally challenge their own points of view.

Paper III is aimed at developing theory for studying the spatial aspects of interactions between protesters and police. Drawing upon Henri Lefebvre's (1991 [1974]) theory about the production of space, the paper explores how space is produced through protests and protest policing. Using a series of annual racist marches and counterdemonstrations as a case, I formulate an analysis based on the notions of territorialization and deterritorialization, relating to spatial borders and social orders. Furthermore, I discuss the use of specific sites for protests as 'truth-spots' (Gieryn 2002) for movement claims.

Paper IV explores how police provocation and subsequent violence by demonstrators are retroactively constructed in activist milieus in the aftermaths of protests. This is done through an analysis of narratives about protest events found in interviews and Internet discussion forums. The discussion concerns the role of "provocation narratives" for collectively evaluating protest tactics in activist milieus. It demonstrates how violence is accounted for in terms of participating characters and plot types in order to strike a favourable balance for the demonstrators between victimhood and agency.

The context of these studies, as well as the theoretical contributions of the papers, is elaborated below, followed by a discussion on data and method. However, before we turn to these topics, my general approach to the problem can be further explicated.

What is the problem?

Protest policing appears to be an inherently controversial subject, which underlines the need for a critical discussion on the normative foundations of studies in this area. Even when the researchers' normative priorities are not made explicit, they tend to become clear in terms of how the research problems are specified. For many, the central problem is about how to avoid an escalation of violence. Prevention of violence is the ultimate *raison d'être* for these social inquiries (e.g., Reicher et al. 2007; Granström et al. 2009). It is hard to dispute the importance of avoiding injuries and deaths, which are the occasional outcome of conflicts between police and protesters. However, a sole focus on the prevention of violence misses the political dimension, and how even non-violent forms of control on the part of the police may tend to make protest harmless and ultimately meaningless by inducing protesters to abstain from protest forms that would be regarded as threatening by those in power (cf. Earl 2003). As police researcher P.A.J. Waddington notes in relation to police negotiations: "It is in reducing costs for protesters that the po-

lice most effectively exercise power; for they subtly invite demonstrators to emasculate the force of their protest” (Waddington 1994: 199).

For other researchers the main problem is how to characterize, and account for the degree of, police repression. These studies often have a healthy critical edge towards the authorities and sensitivity towards the more subtle forms of coercion practiced by the police. However, some of these studies have a tendency to dichotomize the conflict as one between the police on the one hand and the demonstrators representing “the people” on the other (e.g., Fernandez 2008). As I argue in my third paper, the situation is generally much more complex, and different groups have different interests that are not reducible to this dichotomy. In addition, a narrow focus on repression can result in ignorance of the ways in which the police act in the interests of demonstrators, and not just in the interest of elites.

The approach that I have found to be most appealing is based on the notion of *public space*. While being closely related to the concept of the *public sphere* (Habermas 1989 [1962]), ‘public space’ sensitizes the analyst to local contextual particularities and arguably better allows for a plural notion of several publics (Howell 1993). Political demonstrations invariably occur in space and need public space (and often certain places) to become visible.¹ Subsequently, public space remains an important site for the public sphere, alongside electronic and printed media. In spite of the growing importance of the virtual spaces of the public sphere, the occupation of physical and *embodied* space still has an enduring significance for political struggles (Young 2000: 213-214; Mitchell 2003). When representation is confined to virtual media space, political struggles of marginalized groups risk losing much of their potential impact either by being distorted by mainstream media, or by only reaching an isolated *subaltern counterpublic* (Fraser 1992) within an independent media community.

When we talk about public space in physical reality, with few exceptions an *urban* space is intended. Henri Lefebvre (1996 [1968]) succinctly describes this urban public space:

Urban life suggests meetings, the confrontation of differences, reciprocal knowledge and acknowledgement (including ideological and political confrontation), ways of living, ‘patterns’ which coexist in the city. (p. 75)

Lefebvre makes the normative point of the importance of this and other *use-values* of the city, as well as the need to defend it against becoming completely converted into a “place of consumption” with an emphasis on its

¹ I do not regard so-called online demonstrations as belonging to the same type of phenomenon.

exchange-value (cf. p. 170). This is also expressed by Lefebvre as demanding a *right to the city*, meaning the right to actually inhabit the city. This right involves both the right to housing and the right to use city spaces – for everyday as well as political purposes (Mitchell 2003).

If we juxtapose the two aspects of public space outlined here – space as a site for public deliberation and other political expressions, and space as a site for the everyday life encounters of the inhabitants and visitors in a city – we can see that a call for a right to demonstrate necessarily points towards the intersection between the right to political expression and the right to the city. In theory, it is easy to demand that these rights should be considered inalienable, yet in practice the claims for *spaces for representation* (Mitchell 2003) of different groups sometimes stand against each other, as described in detail in paper III. Although it is an attractive standpoint to struggle for an absolute right to spaces for representation, this position is impossible since the inclusion of some groups in a certain place at a certain time invariably involves a risk of excluding other groups. So albeit a struggle for diversity in a city's public spaces should be the overarching goal of the local authorities, the police will always have to mediate between different interests. Ultimately, despite the putative neutrality of the police, some prioritizations of this kind will have a clearly political character.²

From this point of view, the main interest in studies of protest policing and the interaction between police and protesters lies in contributions to our understanding of inclusion and exclusion in public space. The normative assumption is, in short, that diversity and freedom of expression in public space should be maximized, yet with the reservation that inclusion sometimes will have to be restricted (e.g., vis-à-vis highly violent protests and racist hate speech). There is arguably some truth to Herbert Marcuse's (1965) claim that

² Björk (2006) argues in this context that “the police can only support civic life through strict command and well-regulated, paramilitary use of coercive force” (p. 81). In three central aspects, I agree. Indeed it seems impossible to uphold a plural public sphere entirely without (the threat of) police use of force. Furthermore, a clear superiority of police power in relation to protesters should facilitate respectful behaviour by the police; fearful and frustrated police officers are likely to be much more aggressive than secure and calm ones (Björk 2005). Finally, both the police force and the individual police officers must be well-regulated. However, there is a strong tension here that lies in police fears of losing control. With increasingly extensive legal and (relative) physical powers of the police, we can see from experience (e.g., Peterson 2006) that the risk of overusing these powers is imminent, with especially problematic expressions in terms of extensive proactive measures that deter potential participants and stigmatize demonstrators in the eyes of the public. Additionally, a society where it is sometimes possible to succeed in protest that challenges the norms of the majority is arguably better at safeguarding minority interests, compared to a society where any attempt at transgressive protest is consistently nipped in the bud.

striving for completely non-partisan tolerance in society risks becoming tantamount to cementing existing power relations. However, there are also good reasons for being extremely careful about prescribing the general exclusion of certain practices and expressions in public space. In the end, despite its flaws, inclusiveness is preferable as a regulative idea for public spaces – total inclusion is impossible to achieve, but we should do what is in our power to maximize it.

It is perhaps worth stressing that this book is not an evaluation of the Swedish or Danish police tactical concepts. I have deliberately done my best to pose research problems that are not explicitly linked to what either of the participant groups think is the problem of protest policing, this way hoping to find novel perspectives on the phenomenon. The studies in this project were primarily driven by personal and sociological curiosity, an approach captured by Howard S. Becker's advice to fellow sociologists, during a plenary speech on "how to make sociology relevant to society".

Do the best research you can, look at everything that might be worth looking at even when others think you're wrong, and don't worry about whether anyone finds your results useful. It's the best way to produce knowledge that will really work, if anyone is willing to try it. (Becker 2003)

Neither is this project an attempt to create a comprehensive overview of the developments in police and protester tactics in Sweden and Denmark, even though I will provide a brief history below of the process of which the four case studies in this book are snapshots.

Recent developments in protest and protest policing in Denmark and Sweden

Even though each of the papers in this book can be read on their own, I believe that they benefit from being located in the context of the major protest trends and the interdependent tactical development of the Swedish and Danish police forces. This section therefore includes two brief “protest and protest policing histories” concentrating on the period from the early 1990s through the 2000s. This is when the formative events of police protester confrontations in Copenhagen 1993 and Gothenburg 2001 occur, as well as the subsequent police reform work in both countries. I focus on police tactical development and the main trends in terms of protests that have led to confrontations between police and protesters. I also mention conflicts arising from police eviction of squatters; especially in the Danish context these are closely connected to both demonstrations and riots. The narratives below are based on various research reports, complemented by interviews with leftist activists and police officers in Sweden and Denmark. It should be noted straight away that in international comparison the level of political conflict in both Sweden and Denmark is relatively low, especially in terms of political violence and violent state repression (cf. Zimmermann 1989; Karpantschhof and Mikkelsen 2008). This actually contributes to the general scientific interest in the case of Scandinavian protest policing. Compared to more conflictual political contexts, in a predominantly consensual and relatively tolerant political climate it is easier to pinpoint some of the inherent tensions and problems in the relationship between police and protesting citizens in democratic states (cf. also paper II). Additionally, because of comparatively small national police forces, Sweden and Denmark have not had the possibility to rely on numbers to control disorderly protest as much as some of their larger European neighbours, and consequently have been more open to tactical innovations, some of which appear to be spreading internationally (see below).

Denmark

In Denmark prior to the 1990s, as in most other Western countries, there was a marked increase in protest activity in the protest cycle associated with the student movement, the second-generation feminist movement and the anti-war movement, domestically ranging roughly from the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s (Mikkelsen 2002). During this period police tactics appear to have been militaristic in the old Roman sense, with strict phalanxes marching with shields (Interview with Danish senior police officer; Karpantschov and Mikkelsen 2008). Jepsen (1986) identifies a contradictory tendency in the development of police approaches in the 1970s and 1980s. On the one hand, an increased pressure towards a more lenient approach in relation to labour protests and blockades, combined with the introduction of community policing and more psychology courses in police education. On the other hand, the Danish police appear to have maintained a hard line towards youth, squatters, and anti-war protesters, and made new investments in riot equipment. A senior Danish police officer that I interviewed confirms that the main development in protest policing prior to the 1990s was in terms of improved equipment, including the introduction of tear gas. However, the tactics are retrospectively described as consistently primitive.³

The tactics that we used before were that the police came in and formed up with shields in a cordon across the street. [...] and then came our opponents and threw stones at the heads of the police. If things became too violent, we withdrew, and then they could gather the same stones again and throw at our heads. [...] When at last we charged, it was to clear the street and chase away the demonstrators. And those who were hit [sic] were the fat, the daft and the drunk. But those we knew were responsible for these disorders were very seldom caught. (Senior Police officer, Copenhagen)

Then came the riots 18 May 1993, in the Nørrebro area in Copenhagen, after a majority of Danes accepted the EU Maastricht treaty in the second national referendum on the issue. During the confrontations with protesters, the police allegedly fired 113 shots and wounded at least 11 people; several police officers were wounded as well. The event was subject to intense political debate and two consecutive official investigations (cf. Chrstrup, Haa-

³ This type of narrative must also be understood as a way of legitimating current strategies and tactics by discrediting historical approaches. One might also consider the fact that today's senior police officers describe a time when they were themselves junior officers, and consequently had less insight in the motives behind the tactical decisions of yesterday's police commanders.

gen Jensen, and Homann 2000), both of which have been criticized for not investigating the police operation in sufficient detail (Karpantschhof and Mikelsen 2008: note 50). Still, both external pressures, such as criticism from the Director of Public Prosecutions, and internal pressures, in terms of wanting to avoid a repetition of an equally traumatic event for the police in the future, contributed to the decision to extensively reform protest policing strategies and tactics.

In 1996, police inspector Kai Vittrup became commander for the uniformed branch of the Copenhagen Police and took a leading role in the reform work. Based on observations of police practices primarily in Germany and the Netherlands, and on studies of military history, a new policing concept was developed, based on a number of operational principles and techniques codified in two extensive volumes (Vittrup 2003a; 2003b). The goal was to create a more flexible style of policing that, depending on the situation, could become more offensive than previous tactics. A central tenet of the tactical model is also to remove the law-breaking and disorderly individuals from the crowd by snatch squads in what is sometimes described (though not by demonstrators) as “surgical interventions”. The operational principles were put into practice through the use of armoured and lightly armoured vehicles of a type already used in the Netherlands, and the police officers are expected to operate primarily without shield and truncheon, in order to facilitate selective arrests. A prescribed central tactical approach is that of guerrilla warfare; i.e. to be defensive when the opponent is on the offensive, to be offensive when the opponent is defensive, and to strike when your opponent is weak (Vittrup 2003a: 103). In practice, this translates into an increased focus on interventions before and after the actual protest. While on the one hand stressing the need for negotiations, there is, on the other hand, a clear emphasis on more repressive forms of interventions beyond the time and place of the protest.

The new so-called “mobile concept” was put to a major test in connection with the EU-summit in Copenhagen 2002, in terms of the size of the protest campaign and the prestigious undertaking of protecting the visiting international leaders. In contrast to the EU summit in Gothenburg 2001 (see below) and the G8 meeting in Genoa the previous year (della Porta and Reiter 2006b), there were hardly any violent confrontations between the police and protesters, and no serious attempts were made by demonstrators to force the blockades to the EU summit. However, as noted by Abby Peterson (2006), and in paper I, the police operation was marked by a number of repressive proactive strategies, such as checkpoints in the city where people with “sus-

picious appearances” were frisked, and some blatant *shows of force*⁴ which led to demonstrators feeling criminalized.

During 2006 and 2007, in anticipation of the demolition of the regionally well-known squat Ungdomshuset (the Youth House), the overall level of conflict between police and radical groups escalated (see Karpantschof and Lindblom 2009). The house had been an “established” squat since 1982, but since 1996 the squatters had been seriously threatened by eviction by the local authorities. In 2000, the Youth House was sold to a company that resold it to a Christian sect, after which followed several years of legal processing about the ownership of the house. Paper IV mentions a demonstration on 24 September 2006, which marked the beginning of a more confrontational climate between authorities and Youth House supporters, after several years of peaceful protests and relatively mild protest policing. On the morning of 1 March 2007 the house was evacuated by the police in a military-style operation, kept secret up until the time of its execution in order to minimize the risk of people on either side being hurt. However, the police were met with bold resistance and the evacuation ended with several injured demonstrators (Karpantschof 2009: 70). Subsequently, frustrated youth and activists rioted in the streets under little control of the police. Dispersed rioting continued until 5 am the following day and continued with renewed intensity in the evening of March 2. Nevertheless, official reports and my Danish police interviewees claimed that personal injuries on both sides were very limited, although critics maintain that there were probably many injured civilians that did not show up in the official statistics (ibid: 77). Youth House supporters continued to demonstrate on a regular basis for more than a year until, after long negotiations with the local political establishment, “the youths” were given a new house in the summer of 2008.

Another site for contention between police and activists that deserves mention is Freetown Christiania in Copenhagen. The centrally located area has been squatted since 1971, but has witnessed a resurgence in violent street confrontations between police and demonstrators and a number of tough police crackdowns in the 1990s and 2000s aimed at the local cannabis dealing (Karpantschof and Mikkelsen 2008), notably the eviction of “Pusher Street” in 2004 (Moeller 2009).

The international Climate summit hosted by Copenhagen in December 2009 is, at the time of writing, the most recent occasion for major protests in Denmark. In addition to a number of smaller protests, the main event was a

⁴ ‘Show of force’ is a term used by the police to designate the tactic of deliberately lining up its resources (i.e., armoured vehicles and police officers in protective equipment) in a disciplined way, in order to visually intimidate potential “troublemakers” (Vittrup 2003a: 97-100).

demonstration that, according to different estimates, attracted between 40 000 and 100 000 participants.⁵ While the police generally kept a relatively low profile, a conflict in one section of the march resulted in a much criticized mass detention of 968 demonstrators, of which 955 were released later the same night without prosecution (Ritzau 2009). At the time, selective arrests were not considered an option for the police commander, afterwards interviewed by the author.

Between 2002 and 2009 the Danish conservative government (in power since November 2001) introduced a number of laws that extended the coercive capacities of the police in relation to demonstrators (cf. Karpantschov and Mikkelsen 2008). In 2002 the “terrorist package” was introduced, which increased surveillance capacities of the police and introduced life-long imprisonment as potential sentencing in relation to several activities related to a very imprecise definition of terrorism (Vestergaard 2006). Two years later a legal change was passed that allows the police to detain people for preventive purposes for up to 6 hours without making an arrest. In 2006, the police were given a new tool – “frisking zones” – that allowed the police to establish zones within which the police have unlimited rights to stop and search. Most recently, in 2009 the Danish Parliament passed the so-called “rascal package” (Dk: lømmelpakken),⁶ which henceforth allows the police to detain people up to 12 hours without arrest, and which radically increases the sentence for obstructing police work in conjunction with disorder. It is difficult to estimate the extent to which these legal changes have actually affected policing practices, yet the mass detention of demonstrators in 2009 was clearly facilitated by the laws allowing for preventive detentions.

Sweden

Compared to Denmark there is less systematic historical research on protest and protest policing in Sweden. The European Protest and Coercion Database constructed by Ronald Francisco⁷ contains event reports from Sweden, but an overview of this data indicates that it is sorely incomplete. It is, in other words, not possible to create a general picture of protest frequencies for Swe-

⁵ Together with Abby Peterson and Magnus Wennerhag I co-organized the distribution of postal surveys to the participants in the 2009 Climate march. Our team estimated roughly 40 000 demonstrators, in contrast to the organizers’ claim that 100 000 people participated.

⁶ Formal name: ”L. 49 Forslag til lov om ændring af straffeloven og lov om politiets virksomhed.”

⁷ See URL: <http://web.ku.edu/~ronfran/data/index.html> (Accessed 2010-09-23).

den. Until further research has been carried out, overviews must rely on historical accounts about the period of interest. There is also a particular lack of reliable commentaries detailing the protest policing tactics of the police in the 20th century (cf. Oskarsson 2005).

Also in Sweden, the late 1960s and 1970s was a turbulent period with student revolt, anti-war and anti-nuclear demonstrations, as well as an increased frequency of wildcat strikes. In the decade up until around 1990 there were also a number of violent conflicts in connection with squats, just as in Denmark, although by all appearances not as extensive (cf. Flyghed 1993; Stahre 2007; Thörn 2010). The late 1980s and early 1990s also witnessed an upsurge of violent extreme-right actions and a reaction in the form of a growing anti-racist movement, including militant antifascist actions (Peterson 1997; Lööv 2000). In 1991 on November 30, the commemoration day of the controversial 18th century king Karl XII, the police were unable to stop a violent clash between neo-Nazis and anti-fascists in Stockholm. According to historian Helene Lööv (pers. comm.), this was a tactical turning point for the extreme-right movement in Sweden, which thereafter adopted a much more disciplined form of demonstrations in order to improve their image by contrasting itself to the still militant factions of the anti-racists that continued to try to stop their demonstrations by force. In 1993 there was a larger riot on Kungssportsavenyn in Gothenburg in connection with an extreme right demonstration on Götaplatsen, this time primarily involving anti-fascist groups (Alfiero and Björklund 1993).

Protest policing tactics in the decades prior to the 1990s were not very different from those in Denmark, however the Swedish police never began employing tear gas.⁸ In connection with Sweden's hosting the European Football Championship 1992 the Swedish police decided that they had to improve their protest policing tactics and adopted the contemporary Danish policing model, which was subsequently to be replaced in Denmark in the late 1990s.⁹ Although the 1990s was not entirely without challenges for the

⁸ Police use of tear gas is actually allowed in Sweden and has been used in connection with interventions indoors. However, tear gas has, as yet, never been employed in connection with public order policing. Some general directions and advice on the use of tear gas are given in statute FAP 104-3, where it says that the use of tear gas is allowed when more restrained forms of violence are insufficient and when "permissible with regard to the character of the task" (§ 1), but that the use of tear gas is not specifically regulated by Swedish law. A closer regulation for tear gas use during major public order situations is under preparation at the time of writing this text.

⁹ It is interesting, however, that in connection with the 1993 riots in Gothenburg (see above), the West Götaland assistant county police commissioner comments to the press that: "It doesn't help to stand still. We have learnt that from colleagues abroad. We have to attack and arrest people." (Alfiero and Björklund 1993) What was to become one of the core principles of the new Danish

police, it seems that most Swedish police forces had little experience during this period in large crowd control operations, and in particular had little need for national coordination (Taktikutvecklingsprojektet 2004). When it was decided that an EU summit meeting was to be held in Gothenburg in 2001, considerable time had passed since the police in Gothenburg had had to manage major protest events or dealt with any large-scale disturbances.

The EU summit in Gothenburg took place June 14-17, 2001 and brought with it the visit of US president George Bush Jr. Several protest manifestations were organized; the three largest ones were the demonstration against George Bush, the demonstration against the (Swedish membership in the) European Union, and the demonstration “for another Europe”. In a central area of town, alongside the canal, an alternative forum for political discussion was created. Whereas these events turned out to be orderly and peaceful, both on the part of demonstrators and the police, this was not true for other events in their periphery.

The local authorities had put several schools at the disposal of the large number of political demonstrators coming from abroad and from other parts of the country. On the day of the arrival of the US president, Thursday June 14th, the commander of the police campaign took the decision to detain 500 people present at a school. This mass detention resulted in violent conflicts around the school area and arguably built up a general tension and frustration that manifested itself the following day. When, on Friday, a demonstration towards the summit venue started to put pressure on the police cordons barring the road, the police made a quite blunt attack with horses and dogs that triggered a riot on the main avenue in Gothenburg – Kungsporsavenyn. On this occasion the undermanned police were temporarily forced to retreat from the avenue by a comparatively small number of apparently quite determined rioters. In the evening there were continued clashes between protesters and the police in a nearby park, during which the police opened fire and wounded three people.

“The Gothenburg events”, as they were sometimes subsequently referred to, had several notable repercussions. First, the sentences of alleged participants in the riots were exceptionally harsh, both historically, and in comparison with equivalent sentencing in other Western countries. Moreover, some individuals were convicted on disputable grounds (Östberg 2002; Bull 2003; Wijk 2003; Centerwall 2006).

Second, there is both qualitative and quantitative evidence that the events during and after the EU summit had a negative effect on leftist activists’

mobile concept for public order management was not completely alien to the Swedish police in 1993.

general confidence in the police and the judicial system (activist interviews; Wennerhag 2008). In large parts of the leftist activist milieu the immediate aftermath of the Gothenburg summit was marked by feelings of hopelessness. Nevertheless, already in 2003 exceptionally large numbers of people were mobilized against the Iraq war, demonstrating peacefully in cities and towns nationwide.

Third, in 2002 the Council of the European Union defined the riots in connection with EU meetings and other summits as “terror situations” in order to include actors suspected of involvement in such activities in the international information exchange related to terrorism (Flyghed 2002: 38). Rioting is effectively labelled as terrorism and individuals that have been convicted of offences in connection with protests may face travelling restrictions that inhibit their opportunities to protest abroad. Criminologist Janne Flyghed (*ibid.*) argues that there are, furthermore, reasons to fear that suspicion also extends to organizations that operate within the law.

Fourth, after initial praise in the media for their heroism in the streets of Gothenburg, the police were subject to critical scrutiny, not only by researchers and journalists (e.g., Björk and Peterson 2002; Löfgren and Vatankhah 2002; Oskarsson 2005; Abrahamsson 2006; Björk and Peterson 2006), but also by a Swedish Government Official Report (Göteborgskommittén 2002). The preparation, tactics and organization of the police in connection with the summit were criticized. The events during the EU summit were also formally assessed by the police in two reports (Rikspolisstyrelsen [National Swedish Police Board] 2001a; Polismyndigheten i Västra Götaland [West Götaland Police Authority] 2002), and between 2001 and 2002, a project was conducted within the National Police Board in which the tactics in connection with major disturbances of public order were an important part. The suggestions that came out of the project were, however, strongly rejected by several bodies within the police (interview police Stockholm), and the work consequently had to be further developed by another constellation of people. The result of their work finally concluded with a report in 2004 (Taktikutvecklingsprojektet 2004) containing a handful suggestions concerning the adoption of a new “mobile concept where the legality, the flexibility of the police operation, conflict solving and the safety of the single policeman is in focus” (p. 3) and the creation of a national reinforcement organization (see paper II). These suggestions were accepted by the National Police Board 15 March 2004, and led to the introduction of the new “Special Police Tactics” (hereafter SPT). It can be noted, in relation to the discussions about the grounds for police reform, that the final report makes extensive reference to a sociologi-

cal report, edited by Björk and Peterson (2002), in order to assert the inadequacy of the prior tactical concept.

In April 2005 the first group of teachers in SPT was educated at the National Police Academy, under supervision of a group of Danish colleagues. Later the same year members of the four new public order divisions (two based in Stockholm, one in Gothenburg and one in Malmö) had been recruited and were trained by the colleagues that took part in the first course. At this time the SPT had become codified in an official instruction manual (Danielsson et al. 2005). Interestingly, the police commanders received their training in SPT among the last within the organization, which meant that there appears to have been a degree of inertia in the actual implementation of the tactics. Consequently, because of the uneven adaptation of police commanders to the new tactics it is not possible to establish a fixed moment when the reform was finalized, also since it was immediately subject to extensive evaluation and ongoing reflection on the national level.

Whereas the Danish “mobile concept”, mostly in terms of its range of tactical manoeuvres, directly influenced the SPT, the Swedish concept already from the start included further developments concerning in particular its “communicative approach” (cf. paper II). The latter aspect of the SPT involves both prior negotiation with demonstrators, maintenance of (a readiness for) communication between individual police officers and demonstrators, and, distinctively, the development of specialized dialogue police units (Holgersson 2010). Between 2007 and 2010, the Swedish National Police Board hosted a research project where the police tactics during 19 events were evaluated by teams of researchers and police officers (Rikspolisstyrelsen [National Swedish Police Board] 2010a). The analyses as well as the concluding recommendations of the project are strongly influenced by the ‘social identity model’ in social psychology and its proponents’ recommendations, e.g. to maintain a differentiated approach to the participants in a demonstration based on good knowledge, assure working communication with demonstrators, and to focus on facilitating the “legitimate” objectives of the protesters (Reicher et al. 2004; Reicher et al. 2007). Consequently, the Swedish police have added four “conflict reducing principles” – i.e., knowledge, facilitation, communication, and differentiation – to its conceptual arsenal.

On the Swedish protest scene during the first decade of the 2000s several of the most violent conflicts between police and protesters occurred in connection with so-called Reclaim the Streets (RTS) parties.¹⁰ Introduced in the

¹⁰ ‘Reclaim the Streets’ is a carnivalesque form of protest originally aimed at temporarily and symbolically ‘taking back’ the streets from motor traffic (St. John 2004). It first appeared in

late 1990s, a good number of them were held in Stockholm and some resulted in violent confrontations between activists and the police (Stahre 2004). Some of these events are referred to in paper four. During the European Social Forum in Malmö, one protest was also organized as an RTS party. The Malmö police commanders had to endure both external and internal criticism for not having intervened when some RTS participants broke into a bank, even though this restraint probably contributed to the relatively low overall level of violent conflict during the event (cf. Rikspolisstyrelsen [National Swedish Police Board] 2010b). This dispute showed striking similarities with the internal debate within the police after an RTS party in Stockholm in May 2000. The national police board this time directed strong criticism towards the local police force for having been too passive in relation to the disorderly crowd (Rikspolisstyrelsen [National Swedish Police Board] 2001b). The county police commissioner wrote an extensive reply, defending the relatively restrained police tactics used with reference to the risks of intervention being disproportionately large compared to the severity of the disorder and crimes committed (Gunnmo 2001). Both of these cases are illustrative of ongoing disagreements between different factions within the police corps regarding the priorities during public order operations and of the inherent tensions between legality and public order (cf. Oskarsson 2005).

A series of annual extreme-right mourning marches in the Stockholm suburb Salem also led to confrontations and an ongoing tactical interplay between police and anti-fascist activists, outlined in detail in paper III. Police tactics during these events varied as to the degree and type of coercion, which ranged from reactive violence against demonstrators in 2003, to a proactive mass detention in 2008. Considering that the latter incident coincided with the ongoing refinement of “conflict reducing tactics” mentioned above, it serves as a reminder of how the police can easily fall back on undifferentiated and hard tactics despite theoretical knowledge and training in dialogue and a differentiated tactical approach.

Two Swedish legal innovations during the 2000s deserve to be mentioned. In 2005 a law against being masked in connection with demonstrations was introduced (SFS 2005:900) as a consequence of debates related to the riots in Gothenburg 2001. The law comes into operation when there is a disturbance of public order, or an imminent risk of such disturbances. It has so far had very limited application in practice. In 2009, another law was introduced (SFS 2009:389), that extended the legal capacities of the police to remove participants in a crowd from the location. This corresponds well to a

Great Britain in 1995. Subsequently, the specific issues at stake in protests bearing this name have varied somewhat.

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police tactical development where spatial separation has become an increasingly important type of intervention (see paper III).

Theoretical discussions

The research on protest and protest policing is primarily conducted at the intersection between social movement research and police studies, with varying components from, *inter alia*, social psychology, urban geography, and legal studies. In this section I will sketch some of the theoretical discussions that form the backdrop for the papers in this book, this way situating and reflecting on my contributions. This is not an attempt to write a comprehensive review of the field(s) of protest and protest policing research (that would at least deserve an entire paper of its own). Rather, it is my primary ambition in this section to give the uninitiated reader a general sense of those parts of the field to which my papers aspire to contribute and a clarification of some core concepts.

Negotiation and institutionalized contention

Among the broad range of themes in social movement research,¹¹ a central one has been to inquire into the factors that influence the emergence and development of social movements. The classical functionalist model for explaining ‘collective behaviour’ focused on ‘structural strain’ as the main explanatory factor for social movement emergence (cf. Smelser 1962). This approach was heavily criticized in the 1970s and 1980s, amongst other reasons for not properly appreciating the political aspects of social movements, portraying them as little more than therapy for the individuals under strain (McAdam 1999 [1982]). Additionally, with consistent sources of strain in society, the theory loses much of its capacity to explain variations in social

¹¹ The term social movement has several scientific definitions, which to some extent correspond to the analytical needs of the specific research projects. Some prominent social movement scholars have argued that the concept of contentious politics is preferable to social movement, since the latter has a tendency to inhibit researchers from finding more general mechanisms, common to diverse forms of contention (McAdam, Tarrow, and Tilly 2001). In keeping with most of the contemporary research field, I nevertheless maintain the usefulness of the traditional concept (cf. Snow 2004). A definition that suffices for the needs of this introduction is that “social movements are a distinct social process, consisting of the mechanisms through which actors engaged in collective action:

- are involved in conflictual relations with clearly defined opponents;
- are linked by dense informal networks;
- share a distinct collective identity” (della Porta and Diani 2006: 20).

movement activity.¹² Instead a growing number of researchers started to focus on the movement organizations' mobilization of resources for collective action, on their framings of social problems and their solutions, as well as on the political opportunity structures (hereafter POS) (cf. McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). The notion of POS was introduced by Eisinger (1973) in order to explain the frequency of (violent) protest in US cities, concluding that the intensity of protest activity was highest when the opportunities to influence mainstream politics were neither very poor (in which case protests could not be expected to have much effect) nor very good (in which case other forms of political participation could be turned to). POS was later elaborated in the *political process* approach to social movement theorizing (cf. McAdam 1999 [1982]), with the general argument that the degree of actual (or perceived) opportunities that is provided by the political context affects the emergence, development, and political outcomes of a social movement. The actual components have been much debated, with some theorists wanting to expand the notion not only to include factors related to the state, but also to include cultural opportunities, discursive opportunities, legal opportunities, and opportunities provided by the structures of private business (cf. Koopmans 1999; Hilson 2002; Wahlström and Peterson 2006). However, in this context it will suffice to use a relatively conservative description of the dimensions of POS:

- 1) the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; 2) the stability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; 3) the presence of elite allies; 4) the state's capacity and propensity for repression. (McAdam 1996: 27).

Protest policing corresponds to the fourth element of the POS, as listed by McAdam, although the relationship between repression and mobilization is by no means as simple as more repression equalling decreased political mobilization (cf. Davenport, Johnston, and Mueller 2005). Increased state repression can, for instance, promote mobilization among the militant factions of a movement (della Porta 1995).

In general, the overall political opportunities for social movements are today relatively open in Western democracies, not least in terms of the states' general propensity for repression (if not their capacity). According to Meyer and Tarrow (1998), Western countries have, from the last decades of the 20th

¹² Crossley (2002) has argued that this characterization of Smelser's theory is actually unfair, since he was already departing from the simplified collective behaviour approach, and that his "value-added approach" is actually a way of synthesizing most contemporary theories of social movements.

century, become *social movement societies* in the sense that social protest has become increasingly frequent, more diverse, and at the same time more routine and *institutionalized*, compared to previous historical periods. Challengers that agree to protest in predictable and organized ways are tolerated and, to some extent, listened to. Meanwhile, those who protest in *non-institutionalized*, unpredictable, and disruptive ways, and who refuse to become co-opted by the state, are marginalized. These tendencies have been marked in Sweden, and the Swedish POS has accordingly been characterized as “anticipatory, cooptative, and selectively open” (Micheletti 1995: 26).

The distinction between different types of protest performance can be expressed in the language of *contained* and *transgressive* contention. Contained contention represents the routine protest activities by established stakeholders. Transgressive contention is said to take place when protests are innovative, in the sense that they “[incorporate] claims, selects objects of claims, includes collective self-representations, and/or adopts means that are either unprecedented or forbidden within the regime in question” (McAdam et al. 2001: 8). An important advantage with this distinction, compared to that between institutionalized and non-institutionalized protests, is that it takes into account protests that are institutionalized within a social movement, but are still illegal, locally unprecedented or perceived as disorderly by authorities.

A cornerstone in the institutionalization of protest and in relations between demonstrators and police is the structured negotiation and communication between the parties (McCarthy and McPhail 1998). The police can maintain a low profile if they manage to ensure that the demonstrators practice self-policing. If the police were actually able to set a structure of incentives that would ensure the “voluntary” compliance of all demonstrators then the negotiating process would be an uncomplicated affair. However, in paper I (Wahlström and Oskarsson 2006)¹³ Mikael Oskarsson and I show that this is not necessarily the case. Based on case studies of the communications and negotiations between police and activists in connection with the EU summits in Gothenburg and Copenhagen, we conclude that there are at least three types of preconditions that affect the development and outcome of these processes. Comparing the preservation of liberties and public order in public

¹³ This joint paper consists of a fusion and revision of my study of police and activist communication in Copenhagen 2002 (Wahlström 2004) and Oskarsson’s (2002) study of the corresponding processes in Gothenburg 2001. Starting from two independently written papers, I am responsible for the work of merging and structuring the argumentation. Analytically, Oskarsson’s contribution is the introduction of institutional theory and governing of the commons, while my contributions are the systematic analyses of trust as well as of protesters’ desired performances. In the merging, I made sure that the perspectives were applied to both empirical cases.

space with a social dilemma, for which a sustainable solution must include a set of *institutional arrangements* suggested by Ostrom (1990), we point to the difficulties involved in realizing such arrangements in this context. Comparing a political protest with a *performance* (Goffman 1959; Benford and Hunt 1992; Tilly 2008), we suggest that the desired type of performance that each group of protesters wants to stage is crucial for if and how it will enter a dialogue with the police. Finally, we also conclude that *trust* is important for the preparedness of protesters to spend time negotiating with the police and that this trust is based on the local (and sometimes international) history of interactions between police and protesters (cf. Gorringer and Rosie 2008). Paper I also shows how protesters to a varying extent resist the channelling attempts by the police, at the same time as they largely maintain communication in order to avoid unnecessary trouble. This corresponds to the dilemma posed by McCarthy and McPhail (1998) when they note that protest risks losing much of its force through institutionalization, yet it is hard to ignore the benefits in terms of less hazardous protests.

The concept of negotiation

The concept of *negotiation* is actually applicable to all four studies in this book. It may appear intuitively clear, but turns out to be quite difficult to satisfactorily pin down as it is used in different ways in different areas of academic discourse. It is symptomatic that Anselm Strauss in his book *Negotiations* (1978) never demarcates its meaning more precisely than “one of the possible means of ‘getting things accomplished’ when parties need to deal with each other to get things done” (p. 234), negatively distinguishing it from e.g., “coercion, persuasion, manipulation, and the like” (p. 235). Zartman and Rubin (2000) have a more direct approach, defining negotiation as “joint decision making under conditions of conflict and uncertainty, in which divergent positions are combined into a single outcome”. (p. 12). While both examples of definitions may well suit the needs of each author, they are arguably too narrow for some important purposes. For instance, we do not necessarily need two distinct individuals or groups negotiating, since one could perfectly well conceive of individuals negotiating with themselves, reflexively evaluating different positions. Negotiation also takes place in situations when the issue of “getting things done” is not so pressing. Conflicts of interests and/or uncertainty are needed, but it is important to stress that they can be a matter of degree, and that negotiations not only take place to resolve

outright conflict but also in order to maintain relative consensus. Finally, while it is sometimes relevant to distinguish negotiation from e.g., persuasion and manipulation, it also makes sense to discuss the extent to which the latter practices occur within the context of a negotiation.

In terms of generic properties of negotiation, it seems that there must initially be different positions with regard to an object (the meaning of a concept, a norm, a position within a structure, etc.), and that there is some exchange between these different positions (typically represented by actors) that lead to an outcome that may, or may not, differ from the original situation. According to Orly Benjamin (2003: 6) “negotiation usually involves crossing a boundary, however minimal”. Transgressions of boundaries (or of rules, depending on what metaphor one prefers) at the same time make the boundary visible and call it into question. Jordheim (2009) identifies four central elements of the structure of negotiations: *communication*, *purpose*, *object* and *agreement* (p. 20). Some kind of *communication* has to take place, albeit not necessarily in the form of ‘speech acts’ (Austin 1962), but also in other forms, e.g., written language or even ‘inner dialogue’. I am tempted to say that we could include in the definition any action that conveys meaning, for example, even including ‘body language’ during negotiation. Yet, for some purposes it is important to be able to identify when negotiations are initiated or ended, and then one might want to use the occurrence of explicit communication as a criterion for this. While obviously not all communication is negotiation, communication between parties may contribute to the underlying preconditions for future negotiations. For example, communication between police and protesters does not always have the purpose of reaching an agreement, but often involves conversations aimed at building trust, affecting the mood of a situation, manipulation, eliciting information or simply keeping communication channels open — preconditions for negotiations should an urgent need for negotiating arise.

Jordheim stresses that the *purpose* of a negotiation is not necessarily the same as its *object*. I would define the purpose of a negotiation as the reason(s) for the parties to enter negotiation (e.g., maintaining order, avoiding trouble, securing the preconditions for receiving public attention). The objects that are negotiated are what participants would name as the topic(s) of a negotiation (setting the demonstration route, the degree of police visibility, the rules to be maintained in order to avoid police intervention, etc.).

Finally, I concur with Jordheim that the possibility of reaching some kind of *agreement* appears to be a necessary structural characteristic of negotiations. However, this is not to say that the actual purposes of the participants in negotiation are necessarily in accord with this. In the area of this research

topic it is easy to imagine situations where parties enter negotiations not to reach agreements or compromises, but primarily to play for time or increase their knowledge of their counterpart.

A feature of negotiations, which is significant in the context of the studies in this book, is that instances of negotiation can be *linked* to each other. Negotiations between police and protesters, as suggested in paper I, can occur before, during, and after protest events. However, what occurs after one protest event happens before the next one, and negotiations in immediate connection to one event may refer back to both prior negotiations with the police and, perhaps more importantly, to police and protester behaviour (and possible breaches of agreement) during prior events. In addition to this more or less interlinked chain of negotiations between police and various protest groups, negotiations with bearing on future protest events are occurring among activists as well as among police. Paper II exemplifies negotiations within the Swedish police force regarding the tactical use and meaning of dialogue with activists. Paper IV concerns activists' negotiation of the meaning of events, as well as future tactics, in relation to violence and police provocations. All these, and other, negotiations are connected to other temporally more extended negotiations, such as the negotiation of meaning of a particular place and its degree of publicness (see paper III). Even institutionalized politics can be conceptualized as a bundle of ongoing, typically larger scale (cf. Maines 1977), negotiations between different parties.

Following the symbolic interactionist tradition, social interaction itself is to some extent an ongoing negotiation of meaning (Blumer 1969). The examples given above can furthermore be related to the notion of 'negotiated order', involving the recognition that social order is always *more or less* open to negotiation (Strauss 1978; Maines 1982). If meaning regarded in a pragmatic sense – as the *use* of words and expressions – both the negotiation of meaning and of order can be interpreted as the negotiation of rules for human interaction. Not all orders are equally changeable, however, and negotiations can be variably circumscribed with some topics remaining 'non-negotiable'. In addition, as observed by Benjamin (2003), some issues are practically excluded from negotiation in a social context and must go through a process of *unsilencing* in order to be raised; an order must be recognized as questionable and subject to alternative interpretation to make it possible to negotiate. Benjamin primarily discusses negotiation in intimate relationships, yet unsilencing is arguably an applicable concept on meso- and macro-levels as well to capture the process whereby aspects of social orders become negotiable. Social movements are potentially important actors in such processes. On higher levels, negotiability is also a matter of whether negotiation is allowed

to take place in forums where it has a notable impact, e.g., in national parliaments, municipal councils, and boards of directors. Paradoxically, it is likely that sometimes the most effective way of achieving negotiations when and where it matters is by acting in “non-negotiable ways” such as pressure, disobedience, or even coercion. Relating back to Benjamin’s (2003) argument about boundary crossing as a central characteristic of negotiations, transgressive contentious politics may sometimes be the best means of initiating negotiations when there are none. In this vein, Karpantschov (2009) argues that the violent confrontations between police and Youth House protesters in Copenhagen, through the increased attention received by media debaters, actually appear to have contributed to reopening political negotiations about replacing the demolished Ungdomshuset with new facilities.

This leads to a final observation that there is also an important cultural dimension of negotiations that relates to the “consensus culture” of corporatist Scandinavian politics (Rothstein 1992; Blom-Hansen 2000; see also paper II). A way of capturing this culture is to describe it as the institutionalization of forms and arenas for communication, as well as securing that political conflict is channelled through these arenas in order to avoid overt coercive strategies by either party. Securing the possibility of negotiation is likely to be beneficial for social and political change, but political change is at the same time restrained by the institutionalization of forms of negotiation and which actors are allowed to participate.

Knowledge and protest policing styles

Whereas previous studies mainly focus on police perspectives on negotiation (cf. Waddington 1994), paper I augments earlier discussions regarding police/activist negotiations by providing an explicit analysis of activist perspectives. In this context I introduce the concept of *activist knowledge* (cf. Wahlström 2004) with the purpose of illustrating that the knowledge relevant to protest strategies is not reducible to the tactical repertoires of contention, but that it also has moral aspects, for example, judgements as to the trustworthiness of authorities. Admittedly, this kind of knowledge may only deserve to be called activist *protest* knowledge, since there are several aspects of knowledge production in social movements that are not captured by my definition (cf. Eyerman and Jamison 1991). It should also be stressed that activist knowledge (both in its wider or narrower senses) is not exclusively explicit knowledge, but also knowledge that is implicit (Holyoak and Spellman

1993), or tacit (Polanyi 1967).¹⁴ This aspect is touched upon by Crossley's (2002: 176-7) utilization of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus* to theorize tactical and strategic knowledge within social movements as a "feel for the game". This practical sense is subsequently not irrational, and neither is it entirely unarticulated, exemplified by activist narrations of protest tactics studied in paper IV.

The introduction of the notion of activist knowledge was intended as a complement to the concept of *police knowledge* (della Porta 1998), defined by della Porta and Reiter (1998: 22) as the "police's perception of their role and of external reality". For della Porta and Reiter, as well as in my analyses, "knowledge" is treated from a social constructionist phenomenological point of view (Berger and Luckmann 1967), thereby largely disregarding questions of accuracy or 'truth' of the assumptions under study. Police knowledge is described as the link between the other dimensions of the political opportunity structure and protest policing, since the styles of public order policing are presumably not only based on police experiences and tactics, but also on police perceptions of how the political system defines the rights of demonstrators, and conversely the perceived mandate from political elites and the mass media to take forceful action (or not) against dissidents (Jaime-Jiménez and Reinares 1998).

When a protest policing operation fails, as was the case in Gothenburg 2001, part of the explanation could then be expected to be found in police constructions of their role and external reality (della Porta and Reiter 2006a). A successful improvement of a public order policing model should then involve change in police knowledge in different levels of the organization, also consistent with the literature on police culture and organizational change (Chan 1996). In paper II (Wahlström 2007), the Swedish police reform described above is analysed primarily in terms of the attempt to transform police knowledge. Even though my analysis is centred on knowledge as articulated by police officers during training, police knowledge is also assumed to be partly tacit. This can be exemplified by the activist stereotypes identified in the analysis, which indeed correspond to formulations by police officers in the material, but which are presumably often only implicitly applied in real situations.

¹⁴ There are several other closely interrelated concepts pertaining to this distinction: in philosophy, 'knowing how' and 'knowing that' (Ryle 1945), in psychology, *procedural* and *declarative* knowledge (e.g., Lewicki, Hill, and Czyzewska 1992), as well as in sociology, Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus*. For an overview and discussion about the implications for social theory, see Wahlström (2006b).

Apart from police stereotypes, two organizing concepts for the analysis in paper 2 are *provocation* and *dialogue*. Particular attention is paid to efforts of the police to increase their awareness of “counterpart perspectives” and their use of stereotypes of protesters to maintain police officers’ own reality constructions. I argue that perceptions of negotiation with protesters are located in a tension between negotiation as *dialogue* and negotiation as *control*. Are negotiations with protesters essentially about a reciprocal “give and take” situation, or are they primarily a way of getting protesters where you want? This points to an aspect of negotiations not mentioned in the previous section, that of perceived reciprocity. For a negotiation to be regarded as successful by one party, the outcome should not be much worse than what its participants think could be expected, based on, for instance, the perceived power balance. Especially among those police officers not directly involved in negotiations, there is a risk that the outcome is regarded as being too lenient, yielding too much to protester demands without getting enough back. There is a concomitant risk that in order to satisfy some factions within the force the negotiating dialogue police officers are forced to be so obdurate or manipulative that the communication risks breaking down because of demonstrators’ lack of incentive to take part or lack of trust. As underlined in the previous section, not all communication between police and protesters is negotiation and it seems that “dialogue” for several police officers is also simply a way of being sociable and maintaining a reasonably good relationship, which makes it all the more provoking when activists stubbornly refuse contact.

In paper 2 I also discuss the recent development of Swedish protest policing in terms of the different *protest policing styles* identified by previous research. Protest policing at a specific event can be characterized using a number of dimensions identified by della Porta (1995) and della Porta and Reiter (1998: 4): brutal vs. soft; repressive vs. tolerant; diffused vs. selective; illegal vs. legal; reactive vs. preventive, confrontational vs. consensual; rigid vs. flexible; formal vs. informal; professional vs. artisanal. This typology makes it possible to compare protest policing styles across events, and if analyses of several events in a nation state are aggregated, also makes possible cross-national comparisons of ‘public order management systems’ (McCarthy et al. 1999).¹⁵ On an even more general level, sociologists have

¹⁵ The concept ‘public order management system’ designates a wider structure of organizational arrangements, comprising five components:

“(1) civilian and/or military police organizations, (2) the public order policies of these organizations; (3) programmes for recruiting and training personnel (civilian or military) to enact these policies; (4) the actual police practices; and (5) the technology and equipment used while carrying out these practices.” (McCarthy, McPhail, and Crist 1999: 73)

been keen on trying to identify the general trends in protest policing and their historical changes, nationally and internationally. As mentioned above, McPhail, Schweingruber, and McCarthy (1998) set the main frame of reference for this discussion by positing the development of protest policing styles in the US from an *escalated force* style to a *negotiated management* style, where the police as far as possible try to deal with problems through negotiations with protesters, rather than responding by increasing the level of coercive violence. Indicating the complexity of this kind of typologization, in Great Britain there has been a parallel debate about the meaning and consequences of the *paramilitarization* of protest policing, in terms of the increased salience of military-like organization, tactics and equipment (Jefferson 1990; Waddington 1991; Jefferson 1993; Waddington 1993; cf. also Wahlström 2006a).

In the last decade, various attempts have been made to identify contemporary trends in protest policing styles beyond the opposition between negotiated management and escalated force, for example, the *negotiated force model* (della Porta and Reiter 2006a), the *Miami model* (Vitale 2007), and the *strategic incapacitation model* (Noakes and Gillham 2006). All of these notions rest on the observation that the negotiated management model does not really capture the contemporary public order policing style, especially when it comes to policing the recent wave of transnational protest. Noakes and Gilliam's strategic incapacitation model is arguably the most theoretically elaborate, linking targeted hard-line policing against specific groups to a change in police philosophy (Winter 1998) linked to general developments in crime control and criminal justice in Anglo-Saxon countries (cf. Garland 2001). It differs in general from the negotiated management style in not refraining from *selective* coercive tactics in all stages of the event – not only as a last resort. In paper 2 I argue that the development that I studied in Sweden does not quite fit with this model, particularly as regards its ideological foundations. Instead I chose to characterize the recent developments in Swedish policing as a *proactive management* style of policing protest, in order to capture that proactivity emerges as the common logic behind a simultaneous softening and hardening of different aspects of protest policing. In light of the special section on Swedish dialogue policing in the recent Home Office report on how to improve British protest policing after the criticized G20 op-

'Protest policing style' focuses attention to the fourth of these, yet often also including aspects of the second and fifth component. For comparison of relevant organizational characteristics of Danish and Swedish police forces, see Wahlström (2006a). The Swedish and Danish legal frameworks for public order management are analysed by Björk (2005).

eration in 2009 (Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary 2010), we can see that elements of the Swedish model are diffusing internationally, thus confirming that the relevance of my analysis extends beyond Scandinavia.

Describing national, or even local, protest policing strategies in terms of these categories can be revealing, but also risks over-generalization. First, we might lose sight of the complexities and contradictions of a policing style by treating it as a consistent set of principles that are actually realized in practice. In the same vein, we must not forget that the styles of protest policing of single events are partially the product of the interaction between police and protesters,¹⁶ and ultimately a large number of individual decisions and observed changes cannot necessarily be reduced to a conscious shift in style. Especially activist analyses of protest policing that I have encountered tend to create a clear logic behind police tactical decisions that in fact appear to have been quite *ad hoc*. Consequently, these classifications are illustrative, but we must not forget that they are merely ideal types that never quite fit real events.

Space, scale, territory, and place

Like most, if not all, other social processes, protest and protest policing events have a spatial dimension and vary depending on simultaneous 'location' in terms of territoriality, place, scale, and social networks (cf. Jessop, Brenner, and Jones 2008). In paper III (Wahlström 2010b), I acknowledge the spatiality of protest and protest policing and analyse a series of contemporary racist protests and antiracist counter-protests in a suburb of Stockholm, linking to the three first of these categories – territory, place and scale. As observed in the paper, there is already a significant body of literature on the spatial aspects of contentious politics, protest, and protest policing. However it has not been satisfactorily integrated (Zajko and Béland 2008), in response

¹⁶ Soule and Davenport (2009) argue that although there is a significant trend towards less aggressive protest policing tactics in the United States, the policing characteristics of each event are strongly affected by the threat posed by protesters. This is surely at least a partial explanation for the harder public order policing practices in connection with transnational summit meetings in the 2000s (della Porta, Peterson, and Reiter 2006). However, correlations between activist actions and police repression, based on newspaper reports and obtained through logistic regression, do not reveal the main causal direction. That is, we cannot know whether the correlation indicates militant protest tactics causing hard policing tactics, or if it is primarily an effect of hard-line policing provoking aggressive responses from activists. (Even the participants in the events may not agree on this matter – see paper IV.)

to which I draft a theoretical framework for the collective “production” of space (Lefebvre 1991 [1974]) through protest and protest policing, which brings together some important insights from sociology and geography.

In accordance with Sack (1986), territoriality can be usefully defined as “*the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by delimiting and asserting control over a geographic area*” (p. 19). Sack furthermore identifies ten tendencies of territoriality (pp. 32-4), five of which particularly deserve to be highlighted in this context. Territoriality is (1) a means of *classifying* places, and (2) a way of effectively *communicating* possession and/or exclusion in relation to them. Furthermore, territoriality is (3) a mode of *enforcing* control and at the same time (4) *reifying* power relations. Power relations are also potentially (5) *displaced* through territoriality, since territorial markers encourage self-policing without active interference of control agents.

Relating to both Max Weber and Michel Foucault, Herbert (1997: 13-18) emphasizes the importance of spatial control for state power, in particular what he calls the “microgeopolitical foundations of state rule”. In other words, *territorialization* is a critical aspect of state policing and protest policing is no exception. However, territorialization is not an activity reserved for the state; in studies of protest and social movements it is important to forms of oppositional territorializations (cf. Ó Dochartaigh and Bosi 2010). This is the basis of a typology introduced in paper III, which is a step towards analyzing the spatial tactics of both police and protesters in terms of *territorialization* and *deterritorialization*, as well as whether the main point of struggle is a *border* or the type of *order* within an area. With this model, recurrent patterns and specificities in the spatial interaction between authorities and protesters are more easily identified.

Protesters’ territorializations of public space are often highly temporary, in terms of actually taking control over an area, as underlined by Peterson (2006). This relates to de Certeau’s (1984: 36-39) discussion of ‘strategies of power’ and ‘tactics of resistance’, where he notes that the terms of resistance are characterized by precisely a lack of safe places and protective borders. Police forces typically exert a more stable territorial control over urban space, yet sometimes find themselves forced to give up full control over some spaces in order to minimize trouble, notably in relation to several of the transnational protests during the last decade. This can arguably be seen in the infamous police defeat in Seattle 1999, the chaotic tactics of the police in the under-regulated space in Gothenburg in the summer of 2001, and in the explicitly guerrilla-like tactics of the police in Copenhagen in December 2002 (Vittrup 2003a: 101-106; Peterson 2006), albeit the Copenhagen police were

actually never forced to rely on these alone. Nevertheless, more than ever the strategy of the elites appears to be based on attempts to construct safe spaces for their meetings, whether it be the G8, the WTO, or the EU (cf. della Porta, Peterson, and Reiter 2006; Fernandez 2008). The relatively under-regulated quality of city space surrounding, *inter alia*, the summit meetings in Gothenburg and Genoa 2001 might have been an effect of prioritising territorial control when the police were under strain (Scholl 2010); the police retreat from territorial sovereignty in order to create a more stable frontier for the elite.

As noted in paper III, the territorializing activities of the police can also be exercised on different scales. The development towards increased proactivity of protest policing in Sweden and elsewhere is sometimes expressed in territorialization on a larger scale than the street level. When the protest location is peripheral, transports to the site can be controlled, and when demonstrators travel from abroad the national borders can be used to prevent even slightly suspicious activists from entry. Acting on the larger scale is not only more proactive, police interventions typically also receive less publicity (D'Arcus 2003). Interestingly, the antiracist counterdemonstrators in my case study also use variation in the scale of their (de)territorializations as a way of circumventing police control, substantiating my argument in favour of analysing police and protester strategies with the same theoretical concepts. Apart from this very concrete type of scale shift, protest can jump scale also on a symbolic level by linking a local event to broader national and/or international issues (cf. Köhler and Wissen 2003). In this empirical case, this became especially evident in the rhetoric of the racist demonstrators who used international guest speakers to affirm the generality of their imagined social problem. Finally, though of less importance in my analysis, are scale shifts where local struggles spread geographically and transform into broader mobilizations of contention (Tarrow and McAdam 2005).

Place and place-making are also important to analyse in order to understand collective action and protest policing. In line with Gieryn (2000), place is regarded as the intersection of (1) its unique *location*, (2) its *material form*, and (3) the *meanings and values* invested in it. From a Lefebvrian point of view the flows and abstract representations relating to space are in a dialectical relationship with lived places of everyday life (equating what Lefebvre calls representational space), mediated by spatial practices (Merrifield 1993). Although places for political demonstrations are sometimes quite randomly chosen, in my case study of the Salem demonstrations it is evident that the meanings attached to the site of a protest can be crucial for mobilization. Protests also confer new meaning to their location, and inversely acquire

meaning from the place where it is situated (cf. Martin 2003; Mathieu 2008). My main theoretical contribution in this context is to demonstrate how protesters can construct a ‘truth-spot’ (Gieryn 2002; 2006) out of their protest location, which in turn comes to function as an aid in demonstrating the central truth claims of the movement (cf. Barry 1999). The notion of protest sites as truth-spots can be applied to a variety of cases, including the EU-summit protests in Gothenburg, which is an example of how the visit of an international summit creates a truth-spot for demonstrations, making visible the extent of popular resistance towards specific supranational institutions and/or political leaders (Wahlström 2010a).

Provocation and narrative

Whereas I initially framed protest policing as a component of the POS, in accordance with the political process paradigm, it should be clear by now that the interaction between police and protesters must also be understood in terms of its cultural aspects, as should social movements more generally (e.g., Johnston and Klandermans 1995; Jasper 1997). In regards to culture, social movement theorizing has long acknowledged the importance of movement framing (cf. Benford and Snow 2000; Johnston and Noakes 2005), and identity (e.g., Melucci 1996). Somewhat more recently, research into narratives (Fine 1995; Davis 2002; Polletta 2006) related to social movements and protest has turned into a dynamic field of enquiry. This is my theoretical point of departure for paper IV. Despite my stated reservations about protest policing research with a singular focus on the prevention of violence, the issue of the outbreak of violence is approached through an analysis of political protesters’ perspectives on provocation by the police and subsequent activist violence, expressed in retrospective narrative constructions of events. Activists’ often narratively structured comments in interviews and Internet discussion forums about violence in response to police actions are interpreted as performative actions, in their capacity as ‘accounts’ (Scott and Lyman 1968; Orbuch 1997) for dealing with often confusing events of which each participant only have a partial picture.

In accounting for activist violence, at least in a Scandinavian context, it appears that it must be preceded by state violence in order to be generally considered legitimate among leftist activist groups; yet, if activist violence were merely a response to the behaviour of the authorities, the participants in collective violence would appear to lose their political agency. In the paper I

identify one resolution to this dilemma, which is to construct a narrative that involves a transformation of the protagonist (the demonstrators) from a credible victim to an avenger. The provocation narratives are thus enactments of individual and collective identity, as well as framings of the opponent/antagonist. Identification with the victim character attracts sympathy; at the same time the victim role appears to be unattractive for many activists because of connotations of passivity (in contrast to someone standing up to fight oppression). As regards the logic connecting police actions and activist violence, three typical ‘provocation plots’ are found in the material. Either the interaction is depicted as purely a matter of attack and defence, or provocation triggers anger that leads to retaliation, or provocation causes a redefinition of the situation that provides an opportunity for violence. In terms of the evaluative function of these narratives, all types of provocation plots come in alternative versions that either legitimize or delegitimize the use of violence.

According to Gubrium and Holstein (2008; 2009), storytelling takes place in *narrative environments*. Apart from consisting of other associated narratives, narrative environments are the social contexts that give meaning to stories. In paper IV, this is related to the notion of *metanarratives* (Benford 2002), sedimented narratives that influence storytelling as well as other forms of text and action. Examples of metanarrative from the social movement context are the myths of a movement or a group that are central to its identity. Narrative environments and metanarratives together indicate the interaction between narratives and other forms of talk and action. The use of different types of data in paper IV was facilitated by regarding the empirical materials as part of a shared narrative environment.

If we turn to the processes that the provocation narrative refer to, there is strong evidence that outbursts of collective violence are largely attributable to the social interaction during the situation in which they occur (Drury and Reicher 2000; Collins 2008). However, as illustrated for example by the ‘flashpoint model’ (Waddington, Critcher, and Jones 1989; King and Waddington 2005), episodes of collective violence are also affected by factors beyond the specific situation, that is, factors related to social structures, ideologies, organizational and group cultures, etcetera. Social movement research provides concepts such as ‘repertoires of action’ (Tilly 1978) and ‘tastes in tactics’ (Jasper 1997) to capture historical, regional, organizational and subcultural differences with regards to modes of protest, which directly or indirectly influences propensity for violent conflict in connection with protests. However, little has been said about the interaction between different levels of explanation, and the discussion in paper IV brings together cultur-

ally based justifications for violence (albeit retrospective) that are at the same time tied to specific situations. Movement and group culture shape protest tactics in the planning phase, but since protest events are typically not under the complete control of its organizers, and since the outcome is sometimes ambiguous, the cultural processes of interpretation and evaluation of the event are also important to attend to for scholars interested in protest tactics.

Protest, policing, and power

There are surprisingly few explicit discussions regarding *power* in the literature about interaction between police and protesters (for exceptions, see e.g., Jefferson 1990; Waddington 1994). The most plausible explanation is that in many cases the relationship is marked by such overt domination that it appears superfluous to engage in hair-splitting discussions about the specific aspects of power involved. However, especially when it comes to more subtle forms of controlling protest, an explicit discussion about power is useful for maintaining a critical perspective on contemporary protest policing styles.

In research about protest policing and authorities' modes of dealing with social movements, it is much more common to talk about forms of *coercion* and *repression* (e.g., Earl 2003), or *social control* more broadly (e.g., Oberschall 1973; Fernandez 2008). However, these concepts do not cover all aspects of the relations between police and protesters that the notion of power calls attention to. Some commentators would argue that these concepts are of a different category, coercion and repression designating the execution of actions intended to influence a party, while power (when used to refer to a property of an individual or collective actor) is arguably best conceived as a *disposition*, the capacity of one actor to influence other actors (Morriss 1987; Lukes 2005 [1974]). Even if one holds the view that power exists only through its exercise, coercion is but one possible way of exercising power. Furthermore, the concepts of repression and coercion tend to lead thoughts in the direction of a sole focus on actions on the part of the government (or powerful private actors), excluding the power held or exercised by social movement actors.

A good starting point for discussion is Stephen Lukes' analysis of what he calls the three dimensions of power. His book *Power: A Radical View* (Lukes 2005 [1974]) was originally published as a response to the impoverished conception of (political) power represented by, *inter alia*, Robert Dahl, which can be expressed as: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to

do something that B would not otherwise do” (Dahl 1957: 202-203). This conception implies an overt exercise of power (or at least a capacity for its exercise), which was criticized by Bacharach and Baratz (1962), who argued that a crucial aspect of power is the capacity to make sure that some issues are not brought up for decision in the first place – that some interests are not even allowed to be voiced:

Of course power is exercised when A participates in the making of decisions that affect B. But power is also exercised when A devotes his energies to creating or reinforcing social and political values and institutional practices that limit the scope of the political process to public consideration of only those issues which are comparatively innocuous to A. (Bachrach and Baratz 1962: 948)

Lukes (2005 [1974]) argued that Bachrach and Baratz’s analysis needed to be further complemented, since it still assumes that a power relationship only exists if there is a manifest conflict of interests. According to Lukes, paying sole attention to these two faces of power erroneously ignores the multiple instances where there is no such observable conflict, because B’s preferences are themselves shaped by A:

is it not the supreme and most insidious exercise of power to prevent people, to whatever degree, from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable, or because they value it as divinely ordained and beneficial? (Lukes 2005 [1974]: 28)

Lukes acknowledges the resemblance between this “third dimension of power” and Gramsci’s (1971) notion of *hegemony* – the lower classes’ adoption of the worldview of the ruling elite, which was used by the latter as an explanation of cases where lower classes consent to exploitation. According to this view, in periods when the hegemony of the ruling class is relatively uncontested, not much force is needed to maintain power. This line of thought can be used to put the Scandinavian relatively consensual political climates and low levels of state violence in a critical perspective. Conversely, in times of a ‘crisis of authority’, agents of the state increasingly resort to force to maintain the status quo. This model is evoked by Tony Jefferson (1990) to explain and contextualize the introduction of “paramilitary” forms of policing in Great Britain, referring to militaristic organizational forms and crowd control technologies emerging in the 1980s.

Using Lukes’ theory P.A.J. Waddington (1994) has questioned Jefferson’s characterization of paramilitary policing. Waddington proposes a more

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complex understanding of police power than the typical one-dimensional coercive expressions associated with the police. Through “policing by consent” police forces maintain the capacity for coercion, but primarily base their power on their capacity to set the agenda for negotiations, and in determining when *not* to exercise power. Although corresponding neatly with the second face of power, Waddington (p. 199) curiously associates the undisclosed decisions of the police when (not) to use force with Lukes’ third power dimension. However, the third dimension is arguably present when the police “win over” organizers in their negotiations. Since the use of overt force is a potential source of collateral trouble for the police, Waddington makes the point that the police are actually strongest or most powerful when relying on the second and the third dimensions of power in order to abstain from exercising the first dimension. In other words, there are reasons not to be overly pessimistic in terms of endlessly escalating spirals of violence between police and demonstrators.

A core feature of social movements, as they are usually understood, is their ability to affect audiences’ interpretations of power relations in a variety of domains, typically challenging dominant power structures (Benford and Hunt 1992). Looking back at the previous sections it is evident that power is implied in all of the analyses, if not explicitly stated as a concept. The power dimension of negotiations has been addressed above, and in relation to reforms of police knowledge as well as activist narratives of violence, power determines which actors’ definitions and classifications (of situations, actions, and people) are considered most credible. From this perspective, narrating protest events in movement milieus can be regarded as elements of a power struggle between factions of a social movement, as well as acts of resistance and reality maintenance (Berger and Luckmann 1967) with regards to police and mainstream media narratives. Additionally, dovetailing with Sack’s definition mentioned above, territoriality can be regarded as a spatialization of power. Territorialization is thus a means for maintaining and reifying power relations, while challenges to dominant territorializations contribute to symbolically, or even concretely, undermining these relationships. If the efforts by a repressive police force to enforce territoriality succumb to demonstrators and they are defeated in the streets, even if only temporarily, the fighting spirit of a protest movement can be significantly strengthened.

Our understanding of the state exercise of power can be further nuanced. Criminologist David Garland (1997) provides an enlightening frame of reference through his application of Michel Foucault’s analysis of three forms of

state power, i.e. sovereignty, discipline, and government¹⁷ (Foucault 1991). These forms are used by both Foucault and many of his followers to sketch historical tendencies in the development of ruling power, from being (1) predominantly based on coercion or the threat of coercion by the sovereign, through (2) the addition of techniques for disciplining the subjects into conformity, and eventually (3) the development of more sophisticated and complex forms of government focused on steering the population in greater detail, circumscribing freedom in new ways that do not deprive people of their sense of agency. It should be stressed that neither Foucault nor Garland perceive these forms as replacing each other, but claim that they enter into varying forms of interaction. Garland translates these forms of power into three types of objects of crime control efforts:

we find, coexisting on the terrain of crime control, three practicable objects and three forms of exercising power in respect of them: (i) the *legal subject*, governed by sovereign command and obliged to obey or be punished; (ii) the *criminal delinquent*, governed by discipline and required to conform or be corrected; and now (iii) the *criminogenic situation*, governed by the manipulation of interests and the promotion of mechanisms of self-regulation. (Garland 1997: 188)

This, in turn, is translatable into different aspects of the policing of protests and protesters (cf. Thörn 2011). The traditional escalated force strategy is dominated by the exercise of sovereign power, in effect punishing transgressive demonstrators collectively on the spot through baton charges, less-lethal weapons, and/or – in the worst case scenario – live bullets. Negotiated management styles of protest to a greater extent include aspects of discipline and government, primarily seeking to achieve self-regulation on the part of the protesters, yet threatening with the “iron fist” should agreements be broken or the limits of tolerance be stretched too far. Noakes and Gillham’s (2006) concept of strategic incapacitation explicitly draws on the closely related discussion about the rise of a ‘new penology’ (Feeley and Simon 1992) that involves counteracting criminogenic situations and selectively incapacitating “high-risk offenders”. This translates into protest policing in the form of increased emphasis on “risk assessment, temporary incapacitation and the rearrangement of offenders” (Noakes and Gillham 2006: 112), thus drawing primarily on the third Foucauldian power dimension outlined above in terms of the sorting and rearrangement of protesters according to ‘risk’.

¹⁷ Elsewhere, Foucault (2004) speaks of ‘bio-power’ in roughly the same way as he uses the term ‘government’ in the lecture referred to above (Foucault 1991). I choose to stick with the term adopted by Garland.

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Turning to the Danish and Swedish cases, the increased emphasis on arrest (also involving increased surveillance to secure criminal evidence), instead of simply dispersing or beating riotous demonstrators, can be regarded as an attempt to strengthen the disciplinary aspects of control. Meanwhile, the strategies of dialogue policing and facilitation of legitimate protest forms arguably constitute a refinement of techniques for governing self-regulation among protesters. However, when the police lose (or are about to lose) control over the situation, the last resort is still the use of sovereign force to reclaim control.

Research methods

While the research papers below contain footnotes and/or sections on research methods, space is usually limited for developing a nuanced discussion in the article format. In the following I will present some general reflections on the project as a whole and on my chief methodological standpoints as well as problems that I have had to deal with in the course of the project. For several reasons, the research process took some unplanned turns and ended up as this collection of case studies, rather than as the originally planned monograph on tactical interaction in Sweden. The reflections of police and activists on protest and protest policing remained a common denominator for the studies. It is less prominent in paper III, where, on the other hand, tactical interaction is in focus.

The initial steps of the research process

Most accounts of research methods have synchronic form, where methodological decisions are treated in terms of their logical interrelationships. Apart from being the most convincing way of justifying the research results, it is a relatively effective way of communicating the data's strengths and shortcomings. When reading a journal article, I am usually not very interested in the story of the research, unless it is of special significance for the analysis. Furthermore, academic reviewers normally require the synchronic mode of writing. However, this representation of research is quite likely to convey a distorted picture of what research is like, especially to novices. Not that mine and other researchers' more synchronic descriptions are untruthful; the distortion rather lies in what is *not* communicated. Representing the research process diachronically, as a narrative, does not solve all the problems of accurately representing research. Notwithstanding, I regard it as an important complement to the synchronic accounts in the papers by increasing the transparency of the research process. It is particularly important to give meaning to the list of sources in *Appendix 1*.

At the time of the EU summit in Gothenburg, I had not yet started writing about protest and protest policing, yet I stood in a stall at the open forum and I attended the three largest demonstrations for political reasons (as well as for social and other motives that people usually have for attending demonstra-

tions). At the time, it seemed wise to keep away from any of the events that appeared to be more risky. In light of my present research interest, however, I find it regrettable that I was never witness to any of the major violent incidents during the summit meeting.

In 2002 I became involved in a project led by Abby Peterson on the policing of protest in Sweden and Denmark. This brought me to Denmark to study political activists that protested during the Copenhagen EU summit in December the same year. I attended activist planning meetings and interviewed activists from different factions before and after the EU summit. I wrote my master's thesis on this topic, which I later developed into an article for a scientific journal (Wahlström 2004). With permission from the journal, this became the basis for my contribution to paper I, which I wrote together with Mikael Oskarsson. In the same project, I also wrote a paper on police organization and protest policing in Denmark and Sweden (Wahlström 2006a).

When I was accepted to the postgraduate programme in 2004, the Swedish police were in the final stages of outlining the police tactical reform. My original research plan for my doctoral thesis was to follow the development of the reform work in real time, as well as the reactions of political activists to the police tactical changes. I intended to contribute to our knowledge of "tactical interaction" (McAdam 1983) between protesters and authorities by analysing the learning processes of police and activists simultaneously. I decided to focus on the police authorities in Stockholm and Gothenburg (the latter for its geographical proximity, and the former for being in the city with most demonstrations). In the same cities I chose to approach activist groups and networks in the general milieu that one might call the extra-parliamentary left. This category has no sharp boundaries, but usually includes left socialist, anarchist, syndicalist, antifascist, and feminist groups with no direct connections to the parliamentary parties, often forming local activist "milieus" (cf. Wasshede 2010). The youth organizations of the Social Democrats and the Left Party are normally not included. I chose to delimit the study of activists to concern this group because tactical interaction is unlikely to occur in relation to contained protest, and since transgressive protest in Sweden, when it occurs, often involves groups from this milieu. For these groups various forms of street protests, civil disobedience, and direct action are arguably more important methods for making a difference in society, as compared to political groups with more resources and/or institutionalized channels of influence to political or corporate decision-making (cf. Wahlström and Peterson 2006).

Gaining access

In order to follow a process within a group or an organization, good access is necessary. Thanks to two favourably disposed senior police officers, based in Gothenburg and Stockholm respectively, I received a relatively high degree of access, in the form of interviews, evaluations documents and admission to planning and evaluation meetings in connection with the “Salem protests” in 2004 (paper III). I was also granted access to the internal courses in special police tactics that were held in 2005 and 2006. However, in other respects the police were more closed. In Gothenburg, for instance, I had problems arranging interviews with police officers to the extent that I would have liked, since the police commanders thought that this was too costly during working hours. My interviews with regular police officers were carried out in connection with the courses in police tactics.

An additional problem was related to distance. Normally, demonstrations are arranged much more frequently in Stockholm than Gothenburg. From my perspective, the Stockholm police department was therefore more empirically rich. However, my research budget was limited and not sufficient for travelling to all meetings and protests that could have been relevant for the project. Furthermore, it would have been practically impossible for me to be present during all of the occasions when policing protest events were reflected upon in relation to various (new) tactical considerations. Since handling large scale political protest is not even in Stockholm the everyday task for the police, access to relevant informal arenas for reflection on protest policing is rendered much more difficult compared to police ethnographies of everyday patrol work, where the researcher can be in the field for a relatively coherent period of time.¹⁸

Furthermore, I was not solely a police researcher. Ironically, police access was also somewhat restricted because of considerations related to activist access. During a small demonstration, I took the opportunity to talk to two dialogue police officers, with whom I had had problems arranging a formal interview. Directly afterwards, I was quietly informed by one of my contacts in the extra-parliamentary leftist milieu in Gothenburg that openly fraternizing with police officers during demonstrations was not good for my reputation in the activist groups that I was interested in (cf. Finstad 2000: 348). Carefully trying to deal with a *dilemma of double access*, I chose not to in-

¹⁸ Examples of this type of police studies abound. A classic work is Muir’s *Police: Streetcorner politicians* (1977). In Scandinavia, Finstad’s *Politiblikket* (2000) is probably the most influential study of this kind. The Gothenburg police have recently been studied in this manner by Björk (2009).

clude any close ethnography of police officers during demonstrations in the research plan.¹⁹ This dilemma, together with the infrequency of demonstrations, made it infeasible to conduct a study similar to P.A.J. Waddington's (1994) ethnography of the London Metropolitan police negotiations with demonstrators.

Gaining access to the activist groups and networks also turned out to be problematic. Prior to the EU-summit in Copenhagen, I had had little or no problems joining Danish organization and network meetings where at least some aspects of protests were discussed. Apart from possibly indicating differences between different activist milieus, the openness that met me in Copenhagen was most likely related to the size of the event and the activists' intentions to be approachable in order to maximize participation. This led me to initially misjudge my chances of gaining similar access to Swedish activist meetings. The closest I got was one group that agreed to let me visit one of their meetings, where they were supposed to discuss the issues that I was interested in. However, the participant observation ended up more like a group interview with very little independent discussion. Furthermore, it became clear that I would not be allowed to attend a planning meeting for a demonstration that was going to include civil disobedience or other illegal actions. A crucial difference between activists and the police is that, contrary to the latter, activists have no legal possibilities to have a researcher sign a binding agreement of secrecy.

I decided to focus on gathering interview data with the political activists and realized that without continuous access to internal discussions it became more difficult to capture a learning process in the direct way that I had planned. Some of the groups that I contacted were unwilling to speak to me or did not even reply to my requests. Yet I did manage to acquire a few group interviews with Gothenburg groups from the extra-parliamentary left, including a focus group, and two individual interviews, with people who had been engaged in one of the organizing networks during the EU summit in Gothenburg (in order to capture the perceived development in light of what had happened in 2001). My impression is that part of the reason for my gaining access to some of the people from Gothenburg that I interviewed was attributable to being "known". One expression of recognition was one respon-

¹⁹ An exception to this was made when I during the Salem demonstrations in 2008 joined two police officers engaged in an internal evaluation project (see paper III and below). To access the site and to move back and forth from antiracist demonstrations to the racist mourning march, would have been much more difficult (if not impossible) without this arrangement. Still, even if most activist interviews had been carried out at this time, I took care not to stay close to any police officers while observing.

dent's comment on my request for an interview: "I have heard that you are OK".

Stockholm was another matter. Because of my lack of resources, I had to coordinate interviews with other visits in the city, which often made it difficult to find agreeable interview occasions. The extra-parliamentary groups in Stockholm also appeared to be more reluctant at this time to speak to me, possibly due to my not being "known" in that milieu. During my attempts to find interviewees, I was indeed asked how I could expect anyone to want to talk to me on this topic, when I was not from the milieu myself.

Sampling and material

The materials collected during the research process are of various types. An important source of information for the analyses is the individual and group interviews with political activists and police officers in Sweden and Denmark (as well as one journalist). The interviews were, with a few exceptions, recorded by tape recorder or mp3-player, and the sections of relevance to the analyses were transcribed. I also carried out observations of protest events, police public order training, and police and activist planning meetings. The observations were recorded through field notes that were typed out afterwards when needed.²⁰ The individual interviews and observations are listed in *Appendix 1*. The third main source of data, analysed in papers 3 and 4, is posts on Internet forums and texts from on-line alternative media sources. In addition, for the analysis in papers 1 and 2, I used police course material and reports and evaluations written by police and activists.

The various access problems made strategic sampling difficult. Nevertheless, even though there are police and activist perspectives on the phenomena I have studied that are not represented in the material, my overall assessment is that I managed to achieve an acceptable level of analytically motivated variation. Although not of primary analytical interest, I achieved variation in terms of respondents' gender and age, although both my activist and police respondents were predominantly male. In respect to the police, I ensured variation in regard to different ranks and functions among the police. I also covered different political factions among the activists. Several interviewees,

²⁰ Some researchers use the practice of quoting field notes in their published analyses. I have instead chosen to retell my observations, mainly in order to maintain the textual flow in my discussions. Field note quotes can indeed be useful to facilitate self-reflexivity in the analysis, yet there is also an imminent risk that they are wrongly perceived by the reader as "raw data".

from both camps, were selected on the basis of knowledge or experience of protest and/or protest policing, although I also deliberately interviewed individuals who were still relatively inexperienced. As my specific cases became clearer, I also sampled interviews on the basis of developing my emerging theories about the subject (cf. Charmaz 2006). To some extent I employed a pragmatic attitude towards the sampling of respondents (cf. Peterson 1997), which was nevertheless facilitated by my knowledge and contacts from participant observations (see below).

I was also relatively pragmatic as to the form of the interviews. Initially my intention was to conduct primarily focus group interviews (cf. Morgan 1996), although, in the end, for various reasons a large share of the interviews were semi-structured individual interviews (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009). My rationale for focus group interviews was to stimulate discussion and that I would in this way come closer to the internal debates within police organizations and political groups. In few cases, however, did this approach work in line with my intentions. In most cases with multiple interviewees, I encountered very little internal disagreement or discussion where respondents primarily directed themselves to each other instead of to the interviewer. I argue that this, at least partly, demonstrates internal censoring within both groups, especially when relating to outsiders. The participants from both camps made sure that I was given the official picture. In particular, one police group with a mix of high and low ranking police officers was comparable to one group of activists with good variation in the level of experience; in both contexts, those with lower status said very little while those with higher status dominated the interview. This type of self-policing is certainly interesting information in itself, even if the interview did not seem to reveal very much about the discussions that might occur in backstage settings (cf. Goffman 1959). For this reason I made the decision not to prioritize an analysis on the interactions in the group interviews.

A type of public setting, which is nevertheless more representative of the ongoing reflections in the extra-parliamentary leftist milieu, is the online discussion forum. In Sweden, currently the most active web forum for the extra-parliamentary left is *socialism.nu*, which however was down for some periods during the research process (and for this reason some of the posts referred to in the papers are no longer available online). It is described as a site constructed by socialists for socialists. In Denmark *modkraft.dk* is another general leftist discussion forum with a broad spectrum of users. On these arenas, one can find comments and debates prior to, and following, most major protest events, as well as occasional threads concerning general aspects of protest policing and legal topics. This type of material turned out

to be particularly useful for papers 3 and 4. In the study presented in paper III, I also made use of the extreme-right forum *nordisk.nu* to capture the racist activists' own opinions about their annual Salem march.

Internet forum data is far less thoroughly examined than more traditional forms of qualitative data, both in terms of ethical and analytical considerations. However, there are a number of thoughtful contributions to the discussion contending that there is no reason to avoid this kind of data if dealt with properly. Indeed, as argued by Seale et al (2009), Internet forum discussions complement interview data in important ways, especially in regards to sensitive topics. What can constitute a problem for the analyst is that you seldom know the identity of the participants in the forum discussions, and that some participants do not in any relevant sense belong to the milieu that constitutes the case population of the study. However, I would argue that it is, in practice, generally possible to judge from the context if a post is genuine, which most seem indeed to be. In addition, if someone for some reason would pretend to be a movement activist in a forum discussion and make an imposture that is acceptable by the other participants, then his/her comments are probably more or less in line with the dominant discourse in the community, and interpretable as such. Similarly, the fairly large portion of the posts that have a jocular or ironic character are easily interpretable with basic knowledge of movement jargon.

As mentioned above, an important element of my data gathering was participant observations (cf. Fangen 2005) of police courses in the new tactical concept, SPT. I initially took part during two three-day periods in 2005 in connection with the first five-week course for the would-be supervisors of the next phase when the "users" were to be trained. In 2006 I made one three-day visit each to the SPT courses of the police departments in Stockholm and West Götaland (Gothenburg). The observations included teaching, classroom discussions, exercises in the core tactical manoeuvres, and interim conversations with the participants. My main focus during the observations was expressions of the participants' prior police knowledge, the new practical and theoretical knowledge of the tactical concept, and particularly the encounter between the two. While providing a good basis for the analysis of police knowledge and important aspects of changes in organizational practices, one must be careful about drawing conclusions regarding the character of SPT as performed in real public order situations without triangulating with other types of data.

Upon entering the field I presented my research and myself to the entire group of participants and made sure that no one had serious objections to my presence. In general I was well received and often someone selected me to

make sure that I had someone to join during the practical exercises in the courses. Due to my visitor status and the fact that I did not really partake on equal terms as the police officers, my role was closest to that of an “observer-as-participant” in Gold’s (1958) terminology. Despite the friendliness of most police officers, it was a problem that the participant observations were carried out during relatively short periods of time, which meant that there was little time to build up trust. Since I returned to settings with, in part, the same people, I nevertheless developed relatively informal relationships with a number of individuals.

My ethnographic research on the Swedish courses in police tactics revealed that, in addition to hands-on tactical training, there was a relatively strong focus on the “mental” and “communicative” aspects of policing. This inspired me to analyse these aspects more closely, and to complement my observational material with a set of written reports of so-called “counterpart interviews” that police officers had carried out with left- or right-wing activists, football hooligans and “criminals”, as a part of their training. The outcome of these analyses formed the basis of paper 2.

In 2007, after a prolonged period of parental leave, I decided that the project as a whole would benefit from an increased emphasis on the Danish case, which I had decided to leave after my initial study. However, because the Danish organizational reform preceded the Swedish, I judged that a comparison with the Danish case would improve any analysis of organizational reform, especially since the Danish and Swedish police reforms are related to international tactical dissemination. I went to Denmark in spring 2008 focused on interviewing senior police officers, many with a long-term perspective on protest policing in Denmark. I gathered much valuable interview material from the Danish police, but because of time shortage, I have been unable to finish my analyses of this material. I also planned to resume contact with the Danish respondents from my interviews in 2002 and 2003, in order to receive a retrospective picture of the process during the last years. However, for various reasons, I only managed to carry out one retrospective activist interview, which I complemented with one interview with a younger activist connected with the Youth House.

Since my main focus in the project has been on the activists’ and police officers’ reflections on protest and protest policing, rather than the actual interaction itself, observations of demonstrations were initially of secondary importance. Observations of police and protester interaction are also notoriously difficult, especially if the aim is to explore group processes and/or the outbreak of violence. Ideally, systematic research of police/protester interaction requires co-ordinated efforts of multiple observers (cf. Schweingruber

and McPhail 1999), since single observers frequently find themselves in the wrong place to get an overview of crucial episodes. In addition, close proximity to confrontations is hazardous in terms of the risk of being struck by a bottle or a truncheon. You also risk arrest for involvement in the activity that you observe. In Sweden journalists enjoy some protection with their reporter's passes if remaining on site after a dispersal order has been announced by the police, but there is no equivalent option for academic researchers (Oswaldsson 2006). Nevertheless, I carried out a few field observations of demonstrations where I judged that there was a risk of conflict. My aim was primarily to gather material that would enable me to pose better questions in interviews and to use as background knowledge for interpreting other data sources. However, when I decided to develop the case study on the importance of space and place for understanding protest and protest policing (paper III), I found the material from my protest observations to be useful for interpretation in itself. I also decided to carry out a complementary observation of the protests in Salem in December 2008. This occasion turned out to be crucial for the development of my analysis, through special empirical attentiveness to themes indicated by my emerging theory.

On the whole, it turned out that a police reform in itself is understandably not a sufficient condition for a significant tactical interaction between police and protest groups. Since there were few transgressive protest campaigns in Sweden during which the new police tactics were seriously challenged, the phenomenon became less important in my dissertation than I had first thought. Apart from both police and activists reacting to the EU summit in Gothenburg 2001, the only obvious case of tactical interaction were the Salem demonstrations, where the innovations on both sides were driven less by general police tactical innovations and more by knowledge of the interactions the previous year. Tactical interaction becomes more pronounced in connection with prolonged protest campaigns, where there is an ongoing conflict of interest between protesters and the authorities. The protest campaign in 2007 related to the Youth House in Copenhagen (see above) appeared to be more of this type, and judging by my interviews with police officers there in 2008, it had resulted in some tactical innovations in both camps, as well as some internal doubts within the police about the current state of Danish police tactics in general. Since I was not based in Copenhagen and had at the time spent most of my research efforts to map the developments in Sweden, a closer examination of this campaign had to be left out of the study.

Narratives from the Danish Youth House campaign, especially one protest, were nevertheless of importance as a part of the broader analysis of activist provocation narratives in paper IV, alongside stories from other

Swedish and Danish protests, gathered from interviews and Internet forum discussions. The starting point of this analysis was my observation of accounts of the origin of violence in activist narratives, in combination with the intense police concerns regarding the topic of provocation.

After 2008 no more interviews or observations were carried out within the project, even though I was present at the major demonstration on 12 December 2009 in connection with the COP 15 climate meeting in Copenhagen for distributing protest surveys on behalf of a new research project.²¹

Analysis

Data analysis begins already during the participant observation or the interview (Fangen 2005; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009), however the most systematic analyses were carried out on transcribed interviews and observation notes. Whereas my principal objective in data analysis has been to maintain a predominantly inductive stance and sensitivity to nuances in the data, I am not an orthodox adherent of any one method for accomplishing this. The most accurate way of describing my method of analysis is that of a *bricolage* of analytic techniques (Miles and Huberman 1994: ch. 10; Kvale and Brinkmann 2009: ch. 14). However, two analytical traditions have made a particular impression on my practical data analysis: grounded theory and narrative analysis.

In brief, *grounded theory* (GT) is a way of advancing theory by establishing links between, and merging, inductively grounded concepts. In its original formulations it had a strong connection with positivism, but for those of us of a more constructionist or pragmatist bent there are today elaborate constructionist formulations of the method (Charmaz 2006; cf. Lindgren 2006). I have found GT particularly helpful in terms of its practical guidance for a flexible and empirically sensitive data analysis through open coding of data, recommendations for memo writing, and elaborating the analysis through a constant comparative method (Martin and Turner 1986; Charmaz 2006). While acknowledging that prior theory can indeed be used initially as “sensitizing concepts” (Blumer 1954), grounded theorists typically stress the need for moving beyond these in the final analysis (Charmaz 2006; Bowen 2008). For my part, however, I have consistently had a dialogue with various existing theories throughout the analysis phase, resulting in a mixture between established theoretical concepts and inductively obtained categories in the

²¹ See URL: <http://www.protestsurvey.eu>.

final analyses; paper III is an example of a more “deductive” concluding analysis (incorporating much pre-existent theory for understanding the object of analysis), while paper IV is more inductive and hence more closely in line with the GT approach.

In the same pragmatic vein, I have seen no reason not to combine selected recommendations of GT with a *narrative* approach. As pointed out by narrative researcher Barbara Czarniawska (2004), directing attention to narratives in analysis potentially implies finding the narrative form in our social performances (e.g., Czarniawska 1997), our modes of knowing and perceiving reality (e.g., Bruner 1987), and our ways of communicating (e.g., Riessman 1993). In paper IV my main concern has been narrative as a structure of communication. For this purpose, narrative is defined as a verbal or written representation of “a series of events and their associated meanings for the teller” (Riessman 1991, p. 45: cf. paper IV). The main contribution of a narrative perspective to my analysis has been to sensitize me as an analyst to the sequence and internal relationships between different elements of the data that I might otherwise have analyzed solely as separate chunks of information. Provocation narratives are not simply lists of causes or motives for (or against) violence in response to police provocation, they consist of a sequence of elements that should be analyzed in their ordered relation to each other and to the whole that they form.

In addition, drawing on narrative theories also directs attention to the set of characters (see e.g., Martin 1986: 116-122), or *dramatis personae* (Benford and Hunt 1992), and how they develop and contribute to the unfolding of the narrative. In my analysis of provocation narratives parts of the discussion were dedicated to the constellation of protagonist, antagonist, victim, and the occasional development of a victim into an avenging hero. This unfolding of the narrative is related to the plot, defined in the paper as ‘the logic that makes recounted events meaningful’ (Polletta 2006, p. 9). In other words, the plot is what distinguishes a narrative from a sequential list of seemingly unrelated events. I used the notion to distinguish between the different types of plots in the narratives that link police actions to violent acts by the activists. Sequence, characters, and plots can then be related to the morals of the narratives (White 1980), which are not always explicitly stated and therefore require interpretation. The various patterns that emerge from this analysis can then be discussed as possibly representing canonical narrative forms that affect and even set boundaries for how people in specific cultural settings tend to perceive certain types of events.

A final note: attentive readers will note that the term ‘narrative’ not only occurs in paper IV, but in all of the papers included in the dissertation, and in

paper I I specifically discuss activist narratives of protest events. However, only in paper IV are narratives analyzed specifically as narratives and not as another source of information. This is not to say that it would not have been fruitful to develop some of the analyses along narrative lines. For instance, the protest performances discussed in paper I can be interpreted as enacted narratives and analyzed with much the same set of tools as spoken and written narratives (cf. Benford and Hunt 1992).

Closeness and distance

A persistent problem in qualitative research is the risk of not establishing sufficient distance to the data during analysis and overly adopting the perspectives of the respondents – *going native*. This risk appears to be particularly prominent when one carries out extensive participant observation and/or one enters research with an initial sympathy for the research subjects. However, the risk of loss of critical distance seems to me to be an inherent trait of the hermeneutic situation when the researcher tries to understand the perspective of the text. Or in phenomenological terms, you do your best to understand the life-worlds of the individuals you study and thereby easily become enmeshed in them. It is reasonable to assume that groups where there is a strong sense of us/them mentality towards their environment (which is arguably the case for both the police and many radical political groups) may also exert a stronger pull on the researcher towards going native. Police researcher Ragnhild Sollund describes these tendencies in police ethnography where (2005: 50): “the car constitutes a physical frame which emphasises the difference between ‘us’ inside the car, and the ‘others’ outside.” I recognize this observation from my own experiences during the police operation related to the Salem demonstrations described in paper III. Hearing about the detention of 800 people somehow sounded more sensible when riding with two police officers in their car on my way to the protest site, compared to when I observed the events on my own, and particularly compared to when I read about the personal experiences of the people that were victims of the police intervention. Social movement research is of course equally susceptible to loss of critical distance, and it is seldom sufficiently critically discussed in this field.

Objectifying your own perspective is not easy, and I leave it up to the reader to judge the extent to which I may have retained or lost my critical distance in my analyses. However, I would argue that it is actually one of the main advantages of studying two opposing groups, that confrontation with

contradictory perspectives on the same events can be used by the researcher as a corrective for becoming caught in either life-world. That this advantage also entails an occasional sense of schizophrenia is something one has to live with.

Research ethics

Research ethics is a broad and important topic that covers good scientific conduct, the ethics of the research procedures, as well as the potential consequences of publicising the research results (Forsman 1997). Since the former type of ethics largely corresponds to the discussions in the subsections above, I will focus on the latter two types. More specifically, I will discuss issues of respondents' integrity and anonymity, and also say some words about possible and actual practical consequences of my research.

As indicated in the discussion above about access, the issues that I have been researching are particularly sensitive, especially in regards to knowledge about tactical considerations that might be used by opposing parties. Thus, even if most of the research material is not of a personally delicate nature, there are rare pieces of information that might become detrimental to the interests of the respondent's group or organization (the police or a political group). I am quite sure that the bulk of sensitive information has not even come to my knowledge, yet occasionally I have had to turn off the recorder or promise respondents not to use certain statements in the transcripts. In regards to the political groups, I have been careful not to unnecessarily refer to the organizational affiliation of respondents, and in paper IV I have deliberately chosen not to analyse the information from the provocation narratives to explore ideological or tactical differences between specific groups. The paper deals with the general forms of conceiving provocation, and not about aiding the police by helping them classify different groups in terms of militancy.

On the subject of personal integrity, in paper I the actual names of my respondents are included since some of them had explicitly requested their usage, and none of the others cared. However, in later papers I reconsidered this position and have actively encouraged my respondents to remain anonymous, thereby avoiding the risk that they might later on change their minds and regret the presence of their names in print in connection with protest and protest policing.

The use of data from online discussion forums without informed consent from all participants can be ethically problematic, especially if it is a community with a high degree of perceived privacy and low degree of accessibility, e.g. forums for ill people sharing personal experiences (King 1996). In contrast, the type of forum data that has been used in papers 3 and 4 is characterized by high accessibility and participants' general awareness of the low degree of privacy (cf. De Koster and Houtman 2008). Apart from the posts themselves, the size of the community and the information that the community provides are indicators of the degree of the possible experience of privacy among the users (Eysenbach and Till 2001). In the case of *socialism.nu*, this is a very large community, with almost 4000 members in 2010, and upon registration for participation, new members are reminded that it is a "wide open forum"²² and that what is written there might be read by individuals from the far right charting the socialist movement. My impressions have been corroborated by asking activist respondents about the appropriateness of using this kind of data as public data. They have been affirmative without exception.

Philosophically, I somewhat hesitantly lean towards a consequentialist ethical position (Pettit 1997) and subsequently think that research ethics also should primarily focus on the possible consequences of research, rather than its current excessive emphasis on strict rules and principles (even though a strict rule can be preferable for bringing about the best consequences). However, one of the main weaknesses of consequentialist ethics is that it is more useful for retrospectively evaluating actions than for use as a guiding rule for action, since we cannot anticipate all the unintended consequences of what we do. It is equally impossible for researchers to fully predict the effects that their analyses might have, even though I suspect that many academic researchers are happy if their research has any consequences *at all* beyond the scientific community. Nevertheless, when writing up research, I believe that researchers, even those of us who diverge far from the field of applied research, should give a thought or two in regards to how anyone might use the analyses that we produce, and try to anticipate any interpretations that might have adverse effects.

For instance, when critically examining the complications and paradoxes related to negotiation between police and protesters, one undesired interpretation might be that the police should abandon this strategy, with all the negative consequences that might have. Inadvertently, criticism of negotiations might give support to hard-liners both within the police and activist groups. I have therefore found it important to explicitly state in communication with

²² See URL: <http://www.socialism.nu/register.php> (accessed 21 October 2010).

the police that it is fundamentally desirable that the police are open to dialogue, and more specifically to negotiate with protesters despite the pitfalls and inescapable tensions attached to the practice (Wahlström 2008). Even if we shed light on the power dimensions of negotiated management, we can nevertheless acknowledge that escalated force is a more democratically detrimental police strategy. Nevertheless, in the end it is up to each protest coalition to make informed decisions as to the extent to which it should take part in police negotiations.

When I try to avoid posing research problems based on the perspectives of my research subjects, it becomes a more open question what practical use they might have for my analyses. It has become quite clear that in organizations, different actors will selectively use extracts from research to propagate for their preferred way of doing things. However, in my opinion the best consequence of my research is if it contributes to a lively reflexive process among all involved parties. I believe that keeping the debates about these issues alive is the best way to defend democratic spaces for public deliberation.

A note on epistemology

In sociological research, meta-theoretical discussions play a prominent role, and it is relatively common that sociologists state their epistemological, and sometimes ontological presuppositions (in Sweden typically realist or social constructionist) in their dissertations. These debates around meta-theoretical issues are generally enlightening and facilitate a healthy measure of reflexivity in the social scientific endeavour. However, there is sometimes a problematic tendency of reification of the epistemological and methodological constructs that we postulate, with the conclusion that beyond appearances, this is how we must assume that reality is constituted (e.g., Bhaskar 1998 [1979]). There is nothing wrong with attempting to construct coherent theoretical models for research and these intellectual exercises can even be helpful for analytical sensitization. However, apart from the extent to which current realist reasoning creates frameworks that are not entirely consistent (cf. Pleasants 1996; King 1999), it is problematical if we risk allowing ontological speculation limit our empirical field of enquiry or our analytical possibilities, and thereby hinder us from reaching potentially important results (cf. Kemp 2005).

Convinced by Wittgenstein's criticism of representationalist views of language (Wittgenstein 2001 [1953]), I have found myself more attracted to a pragmatist viewpoint (Kivinen and Piironen 2004; Baert 2005). It is of little interest to ask whether our theories correspond to "real" but unobservable social structures (if such a question even makes sense); preferably, we should ask to what extent our theories are useful for interpreting our empirical materials and whether they are useful for relating to the world. Taking narrative as an example, I agree with Barbara Czarniawska that: "life might or might not be an enacted narrative but conceiving it as such provides a rich source of insight" (Czarniawska 2004: 3).

From this point of view, I have argued that the accuracy of a statement about the world depends on the use that we want to make of that statement (Wahlström 2006b). In addition, use must be defined in a broad sense, since critical social science is quite likely to make social practices more difficult rather than easier. For example, critical reflection on policing practices can make these practices more demanding for the police officers but their consequences will hopefully improve. Correspondingly, critical reflection on protest tactics and strategies can make finding common grounds among activists more difficult, but has at the same time the potential to challenge activist milieus to bridge differences and forge new dynamic and even inclusive constellations. I provocatively suggest that by stimulating reflection critical social science *should* make protest and protest policing more "difficult" for both parties. I believe that this provides the best conditions for the construction and maintenance of dynamic and inclusive public spaces for political representation.

Coda

Coda, Italian for ‘tail’, is a music term used to identify a passage that brings a piece to a conclusion. This is the coda or ‘tail end’ of my work on my dissertation. Is it then possible to somehow combine the results of the analyses into one coherent and even plausible conclusion? Even though the cases in this book are empirically related to each other, they address a diverse set of questions and employ an equally varied collection of theoretical tools for answering them. I do not think that there are any reasons to repeat the results of each study here. For this I refer back to the theory section and forward to the papers included in the thesis. For any kind of joint statement one must take a step back and direct attention to precisely the diversity of approaches to the general area of protest and protest policing presented in the studies.

Four core concepts are listed in the title of the book: negotiation, knowledge, space and narrative. Apart from hoping to have demonstrated, or confirmed, their utility in the field of protest and protest policing, I would also argue that the studies show that the phenomena that the concepts refer to are not only possible to study separately. On the contrary, the analyses in the four papers contain intersections between these themes, or indications of where these might be found. Since these intersections open up for future lines of inquiry, I think it is appropriate to briefly draw attention to seven of them.

(1) *Negotiated knowledge* – as indicated by my discussion in the theory section, negotiation is a remarkably versatile concept that brings out the dynamism and interaction between conflictual positions in various areas. Knowledge is not static but negotiated in police organizations and activist groups and networks that I studied. (2) *Negotiated space* – space is also shown to be negotiable, both in terms of the contested meanings of places, and as regards relations of territorial dominance between the police and different activist groups. (3) *Negotiated stories* – narratives of protest events are themselves negotiated and used in negotiations about the proper interpretations of events and what conclusions can be drawn from them. (4) *Knowledge for negotiations* – activists’ knowledge of past events, leading to trust or mistrust, is shown to be an important precondition for negotiations between police and protesters; which is also the case for police knowledge of protesters. (5) *Narrated knowledge* – storytelling as a mode of communicating and maintaining both police and activist knowledge should not be underestimated. Interviews with police officers in Sweden and Denmark also indicate that certain ways of narrating the past can prove instrumental in legitimating revisions of po-

lice knowledge and concomitant policing styles. (6) *Spatialized knowledge* – knowledge also intersects with space through the notion of ‘truth-spot’ (Gieryn 2002), which indicates places that are used to demonstrate and stage specific truth claims, exemplified by the Scandinavian extreme-right movements use of the site of a homicide in the Stockholm suburb of Salem analysed in paper III. (7) *Narrated spaces* – narratives of crimes allegedly perpetrated by immigrants, and victims sometimes taking on a martyr-like role, are salient in the rhetoric through which extreme-right activists impose their meaning on the place.

The studies are too diverse to extract a non-trivial joint conclusion. What is most striking to me considering the four studies together are the conceptual linkages that emerge, and which deserve further empirical and theoretical attention. This way, this ending or ‘tail end’ points forward in two ways: to the actual studies included in the book, and to future studies that will further integrate and develop these and other theories about protest and protest policing. In a sense the coda ends by denying that it marks an ending. Borrowing a cliché associated with a well-known British statesman (albeit on a more positive note compared to its original context), this is in fact only “the end of the beginning”.

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Sammanfattning på svenska

Summary in Swedish

Det övergripande syftet med denna avhandling är att bidra med kunskap om förutsättningar för, processer under, och konsekvenser av interaktionen mellan polis och demonstranter i dagens västliga demokratier. Den innehåller fyra delstudier som fokuserar på olika aspekter av interaktionen mellan polis och politiska aktivister. De analytiska begreppen *förhandling*, *kunskap*, *rum* och *narrativ* står vart och ett i fokus för respektive artikel. Delstudiernas gemensamma nämnare är att de alla utgår från att samspelet mellan polis och aktivister generellt bör ses som en kontinuerlig process, och inte enbart som isolerade händelser. För att förstå hur protester utvecklas är det som händer under tiden mellan dessa lika viktigt som det som händer under tiden för själva protesterna. Studiernas resultat bygger på kvalitativ analys av intervjuer med poliser och politiska aktivister, observationer av protester och polisens träning i protesthanteringstaktiker, internetforumdiskussioner bland aktivister samt dokument skrivna av poliser och aktivister. De händelser och processer som studeras äger rum i Danmark och Sverige mellan 2001 och 2008. Under denna tid inträffade flera våldsamma sammanstötningar mellan demonstranter och polis – däribland under EU-toppmötet i Göteborg 2001 och i samband med rivningen av ungdomshuset i Köpenhamn 2007 – och svensk polis genomförde en genomgripande reform av sina strategier och taktiker för hantering av större folksamlingar.

Artikel I (sambefattad med Mikael Oskarsson) presenterar en analys av hur poliser och aktivister kommunicerar – med fokus på förhandling – före och under EU-toppmötena i Göteborg 2001 och Köpenhamn 2002. Studien tar upp tre faktorer som påverkar förhandlingsprocessernas utveckling och deras resultat. (1) För att uppnå hållbara förhandlingslösningar krävs vissa förutsättningar som är svåra att uppfylla när det kommer till demonstranter och polis: man måste kunna etablera regler som är acceptabla för alla parter, parternas åtaganden måste vara trovärdiga, och åtagandena måste kunna ömsesidigt övervakas och sanktioneras. I praktiken har parterna olika förutsättningar att sanktionera varandra för brott mot överenskommelser, och det finns inte sällan en ömsesidig misstro som försvårar trovärdiga åtaganden hos parterna. (2) Tillit, och bristen på denna, hänger starkt ihop med parternas historiska interaktion, och kan bara i begränsad utsträckning påverkas av t.ex. polisens försök att framstå som trovärdiga inför en enskild händelse.

(3) Olika aktivistgruppers intresse av att förhandla (öppet) med polisen är relaterat till vilken sorts protest-framträdande de vill åstadkomma – de som vill framstå som trovärdiga inför stora grupper i samhället är måna om att förhandla med polisen om det ges möjlighet, medan andra som vill skapa ett mer myndighetskritiskt framträdande menar sig förlora i trovärdighet om de verkar stå på god fot med polisen.

Artikel II utforskar hur svensk polis försöker förbättra sitt sätt att hantera politiska manifestationer, bland annat genom träning i nya taktiker och genom att påverka rådande *poliskunskap*, d.v.s. polisernas syn på sin omgivning och sitt uppdrag. Ett viktigt moment i utbildningen i den nya polistaktiken var att deltagarna uppmanades att göra intervjuer med ”motparter”, däribland politiska aktivister. I artikeln diskuteras de betydelse som poliserna tillskriver två centrala begrepp – provokation och dialog – samt hur polisen använder sig av ”verklighetsbevarande” strategier och stereotyper för att begripa aktivisters perspektiv utan att fundamentalt förändra sitt eget synsätt. Utifrån de idéer och taktiska principer som karakteriserar det nya svenska insatskonceptet – även kallat ”särskild polistaktik” – görs kopplingar till diskussionen som förs i den internationella forskningen om historiskt och internationellt varierande protesthanteringssätt. Jag argumenterar här för att den taktik som vuxit fram i Sverige, och i närbesläktad form i Danmark, bäst klassificeras som *proaktiv styrning* av demonstrationer och demonstranter. Detta fångar till att börja med de ”mjukare” sätt varigenom poliser försöker förebygga våld: dels genom mental förberedelse för att undvika att bli provocerade och använda våld, dels förbättring av sina kunskaper om ”motparten” för att undvika att provocera andra, dels genom att föra dialog med demonstranter inför protesthändelser. Klassifikationen fångar dessutom ”hårdare” aspekter som innebär att vara offensiv snarare än att invänta eventuella lagbrott eller ordningsstörningar, exempelvis genom att på förhand kontrollera misstänkta ordningsstörare (och möjligen finna skäl för gripande) eller att rumsligt avgränsa/förflytta demonstranter så att polisen bättre kan behålla kontrollen.

Artikel III fördjupar analysen av rumsliga aspekter av protester och polisens protesthantering med utgångspunkt i sociologen Henri Lefebvres teori om ”rumsproduktion” som en samverkan mellan *rumsliga praktiker*, *rummets representationer* (objektifierande visioner av och föreställningar om rummet), och *representationernas rum* (det levda rummet – meningen hos platser). Om processer relaterade till de tre aspekterna av rum samverkar på ett sådant sätt att en plats omformas så att den fungerar bra för att t.ex. kommunicera ett politiskt budskap, så kan man utifrån geografen Don Mitchell tala om att det (åtminstone temporärt) produceras ett *rum för representation*. I kapitlet ställs frågan hur rummet ”produceras” genom protester och protest-

hantering. Jag utgår från en fallstudie av årligen återkommande rasistmarscher och motdemonstrationer i Salem utanför Stockholm. Studien lyfter också fram ett antal centrala rumsliga faktorer som förklaring till varför interaktioner mellan demonstranter och polis utvecklar sig som de gör. En viktig argumentationslinje handlar om att *territorialisering* och *deterritorialisering*, i förhållande till gränser i fysiskt rum och gränser för social ordning, är centrala dimensioner i denna interaktion. Fallet med Salemmanifestationerna visar dessutom hur platser där protester äger rum kan komma att användas som "sanningsplatser" för att underbygga en rörelses sanningsanspråk.

Artikel IV undersöker hur kopplingen mellan provocerande handlingar från polisen och demonstranternas efterföljande våldshandlingar retrospektivt konstrueras i aktivistmiljöer efter det att protester ägt rum. Genom en analys av narrativ om protesthändelser hämtade från intervjuer och diskussionsforum på Internet utforskas *provokationsnarrativens* roll i den kollektiva utvärderingen av protesttaktiker i radikala miljöer. Analysen visar på hur våld från demonstranter redogörs för utifrån olika typer av intriger och karaktärer för att framställa den egna demonstrantgruppen som offer och samtidigt aktörer. Exempelvis kan våld som reaktion på provokationer framställas som försvar, som vedergällning och som ett svar på förändrade förutsättningar. Inom forskningen om kollektivt våld förekommer förklaringsmodeller på olika nivåer; bland annat åberopas kulturella faktorer och den situationella interaktionen mellan parterna. Jag argumenterar för att aktivisters redogörelser för specifika våldsamma episoder i samband med protester lägger ett raster av kulturellt förankrade tolkningar och berättiganden på enskilda interaktioner mellan demonstranter och polis, och att dessa redogörelser således kan bidra till att teoretiskt överbrygga situationella och kulturella förklaringar till kollektivt våld.

Samtliga studier är i första hand riktade till en akademisk publik. Min förhoppning är emellertid att de dels skall kunna bidra till fruktbar reflektion både inom polismyndigheter och bland politiska aktivister, dels skall kunna ge allmänhet och beslutsfattare bättre möjlighet att tolka vad som händer på gatorna när människor demonstrerar och polisen försöker upprätthålla lag och ordning, och där interaktionen tidvis slutar i våldsamma sammanstötningar. Bättre förståelse för samspelet mellan myndigheter och politiska demonstranter handlar ytterst om att skaffa sig redskap för att bibehålla pluralistiska och dynamiska offentliga rum för diskussion och politisk representation i demokratiska samhällen.