



POLITIHØGSKOLEN

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'As before, but safer'

The police's evaluation of 14 months' temporary arming of the police



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Preface

This report presents the results of an evaluation of the temporary, general arming of the Norwegian police force between 25th November 2014 and 3rd February 2016. The purpose of such an evaluation is to gain an overview of police officers' experiences during this period. We see, primarily, their understanding of how carrying guns affected the conduct of their work and resolution of the incidents they attended.

The report comprises six chapters. In some of these, circumstances already described in earlier chapters are reiterated. This is done intentionally so that, as far as possible, each chapter can stand alone when read separately.

Chapter 1, 'Introduction', sets out the mandate for the evaluation, and how PHS was awarded the task. Also, a more detailed account of how the 14-month temporary, general arming of the police arose. The chapter concludes with an overview of other relevant Norwegian research in this field, with added weight given to that from 2010 onward. Between 2014 and 2016, no fewer than six master's theses were written at universities and university colleges on various questions relating to the arming with guns of the Norwegian police.

Chapter 2 describes the methodology used in addressing the mandate. An attempt was made to answer three of the four principal questions it posed by operationalising them into a semi-structured interview guide which, through semi-structured interviews with a total of 30 informants drawn from four police districts and a specialist agency – 21 men and women who, during the time when the police were routinely armed, had served as control room supervisors, incident commanders, ordinary operational police or officers with responsibility principally for crime prevention. The last of the mandate's questions – about 10 serious incidents connected to weapons handling – was addressed by document analysis, largely of the reports about such incidents the police districts were obliged to send to the Directorate of Police (POD). Chapter 2 also contains a

thoroughgoing discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the chosen methodology.

Chapter 3 presents the results of the interviews, with a short account of the main impressions formed from them, together with illustrative examples of things expressed during the interviews. The presentation follows the same sequence as the mandate/interview guide: first, ‘generally on arming’, next ‘the police’s contact with the public’, ‘risk assessment and the duty to act’ and, finally, ‘tactical operational solutions.’ This chapter concludes by presenting a document analysis of the serious incidents related to weapons handling between September 2015 and July 2016; that is, during the last five months of the temporary arming of the police and the five months following its end.

Chapter 4 discusses the answers to the questions posed by the mandate provided by the chosen evaluation methodology. The significance the temporary arming of the police had for their contact with the public is considered under Point 4.2, where the leading result is seen to be that it had no effect on the way the police approached the public or undertook their duties. The officers we interviewed said that they were somewhat more vigilant in taking care of their weapon in large crowds, but there were no tasks they failed to perform during this period of being armed. On the other hand, there was a reasonably unanimous view that being armed had increased their sense of safety, especially in undertaking the more everyday tasks where it was unclear what they might encounter. The basis for the temporary arming, the terror threat, played only a small part in their evaluation of their safety.

Risk assessment and the obligation to act is the least well-answered topic in the mandate. The interview guide we used failed to give the informants an adequate understanding of what we were asking in respect of ‘risk assessment’ and ‘perception of risk’. Conversely, the question about whether ‘communication of risk’ had been affected by the force being armed was reasonably well answered. There was a completely clear and dominant view that being armed had not affected this communication. Nor did the interviews yield information suggesting that officers had

taken a different view of their obligation to act during the period of being armed, although many said that they had felt better able to respond quickly should life-threatening situations arise.

The leading impression from the interviews at all three levels – control room supervisors, incident commanders, ordinary operational officers – from which our informants were drawn, was that the general arming had no impact on the way police assignments were planned and managed. Officers found themselves to be adequately competent to carry arms, although many argued that one could never get enough training in the use of such weapons. Moreover, being armed had not altered their use of protective equipment. Analysis of the incident reports submitted to the Directorate of Police (POD) by the police districts shows that there were more accidental discharges of shots and more attempts to take officers' weapons from them during the period of general arming than subsequently. The final part of the chapter discusses attitudes to permanent general arming of the police. The overwhelming impression is that the period of being armed led to police officers being significantly more positive toward general arming of the police than before.

Chapter 5 discusses the evaluation on a more general level. First, questions not answered but to which answers should be found in respect of the debate around arming the police: how did the public experience an armed force? Are what the officers say they do and what they in fact do consistent with each other? Will the positive experience of being armed prove lasting? Does the high level of agreement within the police about the question of arming originate in shared experience or from 'story telling'? Further the fact that the umbrella political justification for the general arming of the police played only a small part in how officers assessed and practiced being armed is discussed. Finally, we make a comparison between the results of surveys into the way officers viewed 'competence and training', 'safety of the police' and 'relationship with the public' in, respectively, 2011 when arming was a possibility, 2015 when it was a fact and 2016 when it was an experience.

The report concludes with Chapter 6 in which the conclusions of the evaluation are presented point by point.

Preface 2022

The current report is a shorter version of the Norwegian report: *Som før, men tryggere* (Barland, Høivik, Myhrer, & Thomassen, 2017) .

1. Introduction¹

1.1. The mandate: what were the questions?

Norway is one of the few countries in which the police are ordinarily unarmed.² Between 25th November 2014 and 3rd February 2016 this was not the case. Based on the Norwegian Police Security Service's (PST's) risk assessment, in which it appeared that the police could be imminently the target of terror attacks, POD, in a letter dated 18th November 2014, requested the consent of the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness for the introduction of a temporary, general arming of the Norwegian police pursuant to the Weapons Instructions for the Police, Section 10, first paragraph, letter 'd'. The department granted this consent on 21st November 2014 and arming of the police was introduced with effect from 8^{am} on 25th November 2014 (cf. POD's letter to the police districts and special agencies of 23rd November 2014).

Already whilst this temporary arming of the police was in effect, the research department at the Norwegian Police University College (PHS) decided that they should initiate a research project regarding this period. Its aim was to provide a research-led basis for an assessment of a possible future permanent arming of the Norwegian police. POD were aware of these plans. In spring 2016, the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness requested that POD facilitate an evaluation of the temporary arming of the police. At a meeting between POD and PHS in April 2016, it was agreed that PHS's research department would undertake such an evaluation as an initial part of this research project.

The parliamentary Justice Committee has pointed to a general lack of documentation about situations in which police operations have been

1 In the evaluation, considerable reference will be made to correspondence between the Norwegian Police Directorate, the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness, and between the Norwegian Police Directorate and the police districts and specialist agencies. To a large extent, this correspondence is not publicly available and is referred to in the text but not included in the references.

2 New Zealand, Iceland, Great Britain

affected by their being armed (Innst. 235S [2014-2015], p. 2). This evaluation is a contribution to addressing this.

At a meeting between POD and PHS in June 2016, the evaluation task was concretised. The main purpose of this evaluation was to be to provide a knowledge base indicating learning points deriving from the period of temporary arming. In the meeting, it was made clear that the evaluation should consider the police's own understanding of how being armed had affected conduct of their duties, and operational solutions; the public's view of this was not to be sought.

The following questions were to be answered:

- What significance had being armed for the police's encounter with the public? This to include how responding officers approached the public, how they behaved in large crowds, if there were situations they avoided, how being armed affected officers' sense of safety (positively, negatively), once their attitude toward being armed had been taken into account.
- What significance had the temporary period of being armed for officers' assessment of risk, communication of risk (between the control room and emergency personnel and between emergency personnel, including the incident commander) and perception of risk?
- What significance had being armed for the police's tactical operational solutions, including planning, management, deployment of resources, competence and use of protective equipment?
- What has been the extent of serious incidents related to carrying weapons (such as accidental discharge, attempts to take loaded weapons from officers and any other situations of risk) during the period of general arming of the police? The circumstances under which the serious incidents occurred are also to be investigated.

This evaluation was limited to the collection of data about the police's experience from this period. The mandate can, nonetheless, be operationalised in two ways: first and foremost, the task can be seen as gathering experiences, as set out in the mandate, from a period during which the police were armed. The results of the evaluation can also be

seen as constituting a part of a larger knowledge base regarding the ongoing debate as to whether Norway should, or should not, have a permanently armed police service.

The design of the evaluation falls within a summative tradition (Bukve, 2016, pp. 172-173) which is to say that it has the ambition of summarising the results such that it provides a knowledge base and some recommendations within the terms of the mandate. Given the limited time available for the evaluation work, a complex methodological approach was chosen. The mandate's first three bullet points were answered by means of a traditional qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. The final question of the first bullet point in the mandate, on attitudes, is less well answered, as this is best answered in quantitative surveys. The final bullet point, concerning serious incidents, is answered by means of both qualitative and quantitative approaches based on reports of serious incidents together with other written communication between the police districts and POD. In addition, the report relies on and discusses the findings and results of the relatively extensive research work that has been done on the topic of arming the police in recent years.

1.2. Arming of the Norwegian police – an overview³

To understand the politics of arming the police we need to look at some historical facts (Squires & Kennison, 2010). Traditions within the police can be divided, broadly, into two main orientations, a *restrained tradition* and a *militaristic tradition* (NOU 2017:9, 2017, p. 28) Norway has always had, and still has, an ideological attachment to the restrained tradition, inspired by the English model established during the founding of *The Metropolitan Police* in London in 1829 ((Ignatieff, 2005; Yesberg & Bradford, 2018). The idea was that the police should be *unarmed* and *few in number* so as not to appear as a threat to the citizenry. An unarmed and numerically limited police force was dependent on the consent of the population. Another important principle was that the police be rendered

3 Chapter 1.2 is new in this version of the report. It replaces a longer judicial overview of the Weapons Instructions for the police in Norway.

visible by a uniform, which was to be blue and distinctly different from military uniforms (Ellefsen, 2015) Although the Norwegian police have undergone comprehensive change since the Second World War in terms of both training and societal tasks, the principle of policing by consent remains unchanged. Armed police would tend to create a distance between police and public. There has also been broad political agreement that the police's strategy of restraint and proportionality would be challenged by an armed police force (Hendy, 2014; Knutsson, 2010; Knutsson & Kuhns, 2010).

1.3. The temporary general arming of the police

The detailed content of the decision to arm the police of 21st November 2014, which was later extended several times, was that arming should apply to uniformed operational personnel (IP) in categories IP1, 3 and 4⁴. This applied only to handguns. Arming with MP5 machine guns was still to be decided on a case-by-case basis.

For personnel performing non-uniformed service, the Police Directorate determined the following: 'For non-uniformed operational officers in categories IP 1, 3 and 4, the police district / specialist agency is to conduct a risk assessment in respect of possible arming with a handgun in line with the decision of the Chief of Police in respect of assignments and tasks that might lead to exposure to terrorist attack. Central elements of the risk assessment are the content of the assignment, geography, population-density, -groups and milieu, the nature of the task and possible interaction with uniformed operational officers.'

However, the arming of uniformed officers with handguns was also not absolute. Already in POD's letter of 23rd November 2014 on the implementation of the arming, a functional relativity was allowed for so that the arming could be set aside where it was 'incompatible with the exercise of duties and where the risk of attack as described in the

4 Category 1 = member of tactical response unit; Category 3 = member of an emergency response unit (UEH); Category 4 = other operational officers.

threat assessment is not present'. Based on a specific risk assessment, a judgement was to be formed as to whether armament could be inappropriate, impractical, to the detriment of, or seem offensive to, the public when conducting duties and tasks, where there was no risk of terrorist attack. Examples of this could arise in connection with crime prevention duties and various control and management tasks, meetings for cooperation and collaboration and so on.

After the police had been armed for some time, and having taken in the views of the police districts and specialist agencies, it was decided, in POD's letter of 20th August 2015, that the following uniformed services would not be armed:

- Planned preventative police work aimed at children and young people.
- Police officers attending court as witnesses.
- Planned guard duty at hospitals or similar institutions.
- Planned follow up meetings with next of kin.
- The Police Naval Service.
- The Police Helicopter Service.
- The Police Reindeer Service.
- Rescue operations outside densely populated areas.

Even though such a functional relativity was practiced throughout the period of general arming of the police, it was decided, when this had been in force for around five months, that there should also be a geographic relativity. When, on 10th April 2015, the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness agreed to maintain general arming through to 7th June 2015 (cf. POD's letter of 21st April 2015), it was stated that -

police should not be armed in those districts/parts of districts except where a risk and vulnerability assessment, weighed against current police operations, deems it necessary to enable the police to prevent or stop actions that would be particularly [dangerous]⁵ for life and health or important societal functions.

5 'Danger' in the original text

When all the police districts and specialist agencies had carried out this assessment of risk and vulnerability, the conclusion was that there was no basis for such a geographic differentiation in the general arming of the police.

From the first implementation of the general arming of the police on 25th November 2014, it was clear that the existing gun holsters - which were intended for specific armed duties, and which fasten around the thigh - were not appropriate for such a general carrying of arms. It therefore follows from the Police Directorate's letter of 23rd November 2014 that:

Police Joint Services have been commissioned to procure different holsters for the handguns. This is to reduce the physical strain of carrying the weapon, make the holster less prominent and reduce the risk of losing weapons in, for example, arrests where use of force is necessary. Until further notice, the existing holsters must be used.

In January 2016, it was decided that the police, no later than 3rd February the same year, should return to the normal situation of an unarmed police, but with firearms stored in advance of being needed in patrol cars, controlled by, and reporting to, the police control room. The police would also in the future probably be, to a significantly greater extent than before, armed in service.⁶ There was political agreement that despite more immediate access to firearms, their use should not be increased.

1.4. Earlier research

1.4.1. The literature and research reports

In the following, we touch on some key research contributions bearing on the topic of our evaluation. Later in the report, parts of this research will be discussed in relation to our findings.

⁶ Between 2007 and 2012 the number of orders in Norway permitting the carrying of weapons increased by 44% according to NOU 2012:14 [2012], p. 325). Haugland (2015, p. 10) found an increase in such orders between 2007 and 2013 of more than 100%. According to a note from The Directorate of Police's Department of Police Preparedness and Crisis Management, 'The Police's threat to use, or use of, firearms 2002-2014 - Statistical update 1st June 2015', the use of orders to arm police officers rose by only 11% between 2005 and 2014: from 2666 to 2954.

Jon Strype and Johannes Knutsson have, in various publications since 2002, studied and compared the use of firearms in Norway and Sweden (Knutsson, 2005; Knutsson & Kuhns, 2010; Strype & Knutsson, 2002). Whilst Norway has a largely unarmed police force, Swedish police are armed. A key research question for the authors has been the relationship between the availability and the use of firearms. They found that, once the different population sizes have been adjusted for, the Swedish police fire five times as many shots as the Norwegian police. They found, further, that, in Sweden, the other party was injured 4.5 times, and killed approximately 1.6 times, as often. Also, in Sweden, incidents resulted in injury to 8% of the police personnel involved, while no Norwegian police were similarly injured. Knutsson and Strype argue that the central factor in this is differing practice in using weapons: while the Norwegian police often 'freeze' the situation, calling in reinforcements and obtaining permission to deploy weapons, Swedish police will usually take a decision within a shorter time frame.

In 2011 and 2012, Liv Finstad (Finstad, 2011, 2012) published her report *Politi og bevæpning. Hvordan kan nyere forskning informere diskusjonen om norsk politi bør bli permanent bevæpnet?* [*Arming the police. How can recent research inform the debate about permanent arming of the police?*] This was an interim report presented to the Arms Committee of the Norwegian Police Federation [PF]. Against the background of a review of national and international research into arming of police, she tried to discover the extent to which research strengthens or weakens the case for and against arming the police. As part of this, she looked at comparative studies concerning the risk of injury and of death in Australia, USA, Great Britain and the Nordic countries. These studies, in general, show that these risks are higher where there is a permanently armed police although other possible factors need to be taken into account. She concluded that the review had done nothing to alter her view that Norway should have a largely unarmed police service.

1.4.2. Master's theses

In the last few years, several good quality master's theses have been written on the theme of arming the police. Those referred to here were

written at the University of Stavanger, at the Police University College (PHS) and at Oslo University. Each considers a different perspective on the question, particularly on the question of risk and the perception of risk. They are mainly theses based on interviews held in different divisions and levels of the police service, together with observation.

Sigrid Ingeborg Reenaas (Reenaas, 2014) submitted her thesis as part of the master's degree in risk- and safety management at the University of Stavanger. The article is based on 16 interviews she conducted in the Oslo police district, divided between five different police stations. The interviews were divided equally between operational and tactical levels. Her thesis addresses the kind of decision-making required in situations where guns are involved and how the authority to make such decisions affects this, as well as how the incidence of arming officers is affected by risk perception and situational understanding at these different levels. Reenaas found relatively broad agreement across the levels, in respect of both the importance of experience and of a focus on the Weapons Instructions. She also points out that indeterminate risk seems to be less well accepted than earlier, and that many officers want to have a weapon for 'safety's sake', fearing that a situation might escalate.

In his master's thesis, Jan Erik Haugland (Haugland, 2015) attempts to provide a clear explanation for the increase in orders permitting arming of the police between 2009 and 2013 (p. 50). He explores five different explanations of the problem and uses different data sources, including nine interviews with a total of 16 informants (p. 35). His informants were control room supervisors (N=8), section leaders (N=3) and police constables (N=5). Despite there being no clear change in the level of criminality, the number of such orders increased dramatically. Several of Haugland's informants told him they are now more often notified of a knife as part of an incident, and that there is a lower threshold than before for going to such an incident armed. Haugland also points to reduced treatment capacity in the healthcare system as possibly being related to the sharply increased number of incidents of armed assistance assignments for the healthcare services.

In connection with their master's thesis, *Midlertidig bevæpnet* [*Temporarily armed*] (Sandham & Todnem, 2016), the authors interviewed operations and emergency managers in the police. The interview subjects were asked about the extent to which they had experienced being armed affecting both armed and ordinary assignments. The control room supervisors and incident commanders interviewed described there being continual changes to the framework conditions governing temporary arming of the police, which meant that control room supervisors could form divergent views as to which guidelines applied. Some of the informants stressed that a loss of control over grey-area incidents was a serious consequence of the temporary arming. The temporary arming also led to some armed operations being carried out without the control room supervisor or the incident commanders being involved. The informants also thought that they had experienced no negative response from, or changes in their contact with the public in being armed. The informants stressed that it is the police's fundamental way of working which determines the quality of their contact with the public. The authors also found that the informants held the view that the period of temporary arming of the police provided an increase in their basic security, and that this applied more to everyday situations than to any possible terror threat. A couple of the informants mentioned that lack of training and practice when they were first armed had been frustrating, and that it could be uncomfortable carrying a weapon in dense crowds; nevertheless, the authors' impression was that the informants thought that, in leading to few serious incidents, it had gone well.

The point of departure for the master's thesis *Bevæpning av politiet. For sikkerhets skyld?* [*Arming the police. For safety's sake?*] was that Helstad and Ingjer (Helstad & Ingjer, 2016) wanted to look more closely at how the police and various groups of the public argued for their positions in the debate about arming the police. They conducted six focus-group interviews. Two of these groups consisted of operational police drawn from IP1-5, while the other comprised two groups of pensioners, one of students and one of young men from minority backgrounds. Among the police, what stood out was the claim that being armed led to greater safety, both for themselves and for the public. Several of the police

informants pointed out that it is principally their approach to the public that is important in resolving incidents - the weapon is only a natural tool, albeit one that they must be aware of and careful with. They argued that it is their basic training which leaves them good at solving assignments, the gun not changing this. Some defended a possible future permanent arming on the ground of negative changes in society resulting in more risk in everyday life. In addition, they related several episodes that could either have had better outcomes had they been armed, or which had a good outcome precisely because they were armed. The groups drawn from the public, however, placed greater emphasis on the weapon. They thought that the police being arming could make them feel more insecure, a reaction the police seemed not to fully appreciate.

Skjevraak (Skjevraak, 2016), in her master's thesis, investigated the attitudes of police students who had been in training during the period of temporary, general arming. She compared the attitudes of third year students from, respectively, 2013 and 2016. The 2013 cohort were the last group to graduate from PHS before the general arming began, whilst the 2016 students had been students throughout it. In 2013, some 32% of the students asserted that the police should be permanently armed: in 2016 it was 84%. In addition, Skjevraak found that - in contrast to earlier studies (Fekjær & Strype, 2015) there was no difference in attitude towards arming on the basis of either gender or stance toward the police profession. On the other hand, she found that perception of risk played a part in these attitudes: 'feelings of vulnerability' were associated to a greater extent with a positive attitude toward permanent arming, whilst an emphasis on the dangers of being armed led to a more negative view. She also found, in common with several of the other studies mentioned here, that the respondents were not particularly concerned about a terrorist threat but believed that dangerous everyday assignments were alone reason enough for arming.

Hans Petter Lade (Lade, 2016) presented his master's thesis, *Med våpen på høfta* [With a gun on your hip] in December 2016. Lade studied police officers' interaction and communication with the public during

the temporary arming of the police. He did this with the help of fieldwork at the public order division at Central Police Station in Oslo and at Lillehammer Police Station, where he used both interviews and observation as a means of gathering data. He found very little change in the way the police approached the public. His respondents expressed an awareness of the risk of having their weapon taken from them and had implemented specific measures to limit this risk. Some also said that in certain situations they had considered exercising greater restraint for fear of losing their weapon. Despite this, in his observations, Lade found, paradoxically, that officers became less aware of taking such precautions (keeping their distance, standing with weapons turned away etc) in 'busier', more confusing, situations - when there was greatest need to be vigilant. He also found professional discussion around being armed to be almost absent. What discussions there were, and professional input, were random and unstructured.

2. Methodology

2.1. Requirements of and choice of methodology

‘Evaluation’ is a multifaceted concept. ‘Everything’ can be evaluated, and anyone who so wishes can evaluate something. It involves everything from small local measures in the workplace to great national reforms. The field of evaluation has gone through various phases, and evaluation as a research activity is ‘much debated’ (Halvorsen, 2013, pp. 233-243; Sverdrup, 2014, pp. 24-59) This debate concerns the extent to which an evaluation can be called scientific, and this is connected to the methodological approach. How scientific an evaluation is, is discussed primarily in terms of ‘position’ or ‘distance’ from the client. The client, through the mandate, the time allowed for the evaluation and the financing of it, can determine its terms – which is in breach of the ideals of freedom of enquiry. Another, and important consideration is who enjoys control over the results. If an evaluation yields results unfavourable to the client, they may wish to prevent further publication of them. In more recent evaluation research or research-based evaluation, many of these terms are set out in the agreement forming the basis for an evaluation assignment. Some will therefore argue that the debate about the value of evaluation research is now outdated. Evaluations where the client expects to be able to both steer the research process, and determine the ‘value’ of the results, will largely not be undertaken in independent research environments, whilst research-based evaluations needs must be based on the same criteria as other research activity.

Evaluation research must use scientific theory and method and hold a reflected and critical position toward its own work process (Halvorsen, 2013, pp. 242-244). This evaluation has been conducted by the research department at PHS. Placing the evaluation external to POD and within a research environment creates the expectation of a research-based report. This evaluation has maintained a distance from its client, used scientific method, is located within a research context, and will be disseminated in open research channels.

Another requirement for a research evaluation is that it is located within a relevant area of knowledge and research (Bukve, 2016, p. 189). An important expectation of a research-based evaluation is that it contributes to the *systematic production of new knowledge*. In the absence of a presentation of existing knowledge in the field, it is difficult for researcher, reader and client to see what scientific contribution the work represents (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 123)

The work of evaluation on which this report is based has been carried out within a *summative tradition* (Bukve, 2016, pp. 172-173). In summative evaluations, conclusions and possible implications will appear after the measure or event has taken place – in our case after the period of temporary, general arming of the police. Traditionally, the results from this type of evaluation can be used by the client as a knowledge base in similar or comparable situations.

In this work, we have striven to meet the requirements of the tradition of research-based evaluation (Halvorsen, 2013, p. 233). Within this tradition, 'evaluation' is defined as: 'A systematic collection of data, analysis and assessment of a planned, ongoing or completed activity, business, instrument or sector' (Halvorsen 2013, p.16).

With reference to the time frame and mandate, it was decided to place this evaluation project within an evaluation design using qualitative methodology. Data collection would take place by means of qualitative interviews with serving, operative officers in certain, selected police districts. The evaluation is based primarily on the informant's experiences, and hardly at all on how the public perceived the period of armed police. Document analysis was also used (Bratberg, 2014) to gather and systematise serious incidents reported from September 2015 up to and including July 2016. The document analysis is a quantitative presentation of the number of accidental weapon discharges, as well as in what situation and how many times attempts were made to deprive officers of their weapon. A qualitative review has also been made, by document analysis, of the correspondence between POD and the police districts, to say something about POD's difficulties with the implementation and

conduct of the temporary arming of officers. The report also contains a review of other, relevant literature.

2.1.1. Implementation

The interviews were conducted in October and November 2016. Geographically speaking, the interviews were held in the Troms, Rogaland, Vestoppland and Oslo police districts. In addition, we interviewed four members of the National Mobile Police Service (UP). Each of the interview subjects held a position in the police before, during and after the period of temporary arming of the police. Two of the interviews took place in group form – that is, on two occasions two interview subjects were interviewed together. One interview took place at PHS, the others at the interviewees' place of work.

We chose to make contact, initially, with the management in the police districts, and they were responsible for the selection of interview objects.

We would like to interview people who served as control room supervisors during the period with temporary arming of the police, two who functioned as incident commanders and two who had ordinary uniformed duties. We would also like to interview two officers who, in the same period, were principally engaged in crime prevention. If possible, we would like to have both genders represented among those we interview.

2.1.2. The sample

The mandate focuses on contact with the public, on the concept of risk and on tactical resolution of incidents. With this in mind, it was decided that the interviews should be of officers with extensive contact with the public. Geographically, the interviewees were drawn from different police district. The interviewees in Oslo were officers with special responsibility for crime prevention measures among young people. In total, we interviewed 30 informants of which 21 were men and 9 women. There were 7 control room supervisors (OL), 6 incident commanders (IL), 10

ordinary operational officers (IP) and 7 crime prevention officers (F). In some police districts, officers with responsibility for crime prevention work as ordinary operational officers in addition to holding responsibility for the prevention strategy of the service. We have defined the interviewees from UP as operational officers. The interviewees had been in service from between 1988 and 2012.⁷

2.1.3. The interviews

The interviews were conducted partly as structured interviews and partly as semi-structured interviews, and also, in part, the interviews were completely open conversations on the subject of arming the police.

Initially, open questions about experiences from the period of temporary arming were posed. This was both to get the informants familiar with the interview situation, and because it was a useful way of coming into the topic. If the interviewees talked their way into the central points of the interview guide, we followed these up then and there.

The interviews lasted between 50 and 70 minutes. Before the interviews began, we asked for permission to use recording equipment. Each interviewee was informed that participation was voluntary, and that they could terminate the interview at any point. The interviews were transcribed as text in Word and categorised using NVIVO 10. Anything identifying either place or personal details was removed from the transcription. No one withdrew from their interview, or asked to check the anonymisation after transcription of the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in as comfortable a setting as possible. Not all interviewees were well informed about the reason for the interview or why they were to be interviewed. Many had just been told that 'some researchers' were coming to talk about arming of the force. It was therefore necessary to devote some time to informing them about the project. We made it clear that it was the officers' own views we were looking for and that there was no 'right answer' to the questions we

⁷ From the time of graduation from The Police School / PHS.

wanted to ask. It also became clear that we needed to stress that this was not about arguments 'for or against' in the debate about being armed, but rather about gathering professional judgements and experiences from their period of being temporarily armed.

The interview guide was developed by operationalising the first three bullet points of the mandate (Appendix 2). All the interviewees were asked about the same things, but with a slightly different approach to the questions – depending on which role the officer had. When we asked the IP about how they approached larger crowds, the same question for the OL was whether he or she steered the response personnel towards such tasks in a different way during the period of temporary arming. An example of how we organised the interview guide is:

The interview guide's starting point:

Question 1: What significance had being armed for the police's encounter with the public?

- A. How have responding officers approached the public?*
- B. How have responding officers conducted themselves in large crowds?*
- C. Have there been situations that responding officers sought to avoid?*
- D. - seen against the background of your view of being armed?*

For the response personnel, this was formulated as follows:

- 1. Did being armed change the way you approached the public? (crime-prevention duties; conducting ordinary patrols; youngsters partying at home without adults present)*
- 2. How have you behaved in large crowds? (gangs of school-age youngsters; festivals, political gatherings)*
 - 2.1 To what extent had the equipment (the gun holster) an effect?*
 - 2.2 To what extent had having a loaded gun an effect.*
- 3. Have there been situations that responding officers avoided?*

4. *Did being armed affect your feeling of safety in given situations?
(possibly reinforced; changed your view on being armed?)*

The entire interview guide had the same layout. Subsequent printing out and the basis for the analysis followed the same layout, as will, largely, presentation of the results.

2.1.4. Document analysis

Analysis of documents supplied by POD has been a further important source of data for the work of evaluation. The documents consist largely of correspondence between POD and the police districts and specialist agencies. What is particularly interesting in this context is the monthly reporting of serious incidents related to handling firearms. We took as our starting point POD's reports to the Ministry of Justice and Emergency Preparedness from and including September 2015. From December 2014, the police districts and specialist agencies were required to report serious incidents, but it was not until late summer / autumn 2015 that accidental discharge of shots and attempts to take firearms from armed officers were specifically required to be reported. An exception is made for accidental discharges in the de-cocking box (that is, a place to de-cock and unload the gun in a safe way) which do not need to be reported. According to the correspondence with POD, the requirement to report was in force for the duration of the temporary, general arming of the police, but reporting of accidental firearms discharges has continued after it ended. In this report we have, therefore, systematised and analysed the reports delivered from and including September 2015 up to and including July 2016.

As well as containing the reports of serious incidents relating to weapons handling, these documents shed light on the communication between POD and the police districts and specialist agencies during the temporary arming of the police. While the interviews represent a retrospective perspective in which the temporary arming lies 8-9 months back in time, the documents give us an insight into the assessments made at the time. The documents show us which guidelines were set centrally during this period, and which local adaptations were made in respect of

them. They also provide insight into the difficulties the police had with implementation and conduct of the temporary carrying of arms, which can be set against the impressions given by the interviews.

In addition to information about serious incidents related to weapons handling, POD asked the police districts and specialist agencies to answer, in their monthly reporting, questions about whether the general arming of the police had affected their ordinary duties and whether it had revealed the need for further training. We have made use of the data in this material, for example in the report's Point 3.7, and in the compilation contained in Point 5.3.

2.2. Discussion of methodology

Criticism of evaluations and of evaluation research concerns whether they have the research freedoms necessary to warrant the term research, and whether the work attains a truly scientific level. Not least, the discussion concerns the framework set by the client in terms of the time and resources made available. This evaluation has been developed as an independent project within PHS. The client, POD, has not at any stage attempted or wished to direct the direction the project has taken. In the course of the work there has been an information meeting in which the progress of the report was presented. The content of the report is therefore PHS's responsibility alone.

A qualitative approach is never able to be representative, nor can it be what is called, in a quantitative approach, 'replicable' (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, pp. 246-248). Usage of research concepts such as 'objectivity', 'validity' and 'reliability' is different in qualitative studies than in quantitative studies (Thagaard, 2009, pp. 198-200). 'Objectivity' in qualitative studies takes in two factors: firstly, objectivity must be understood as *free from one-sidedness*, which is to say that it refers to reliable, verifiable knowledge, free from the biased subjectivity of the researchers. 'Reflexive objectivity' refers to the ability to remain aware of one's own position in relation to that being studied, and the capacity to discuss this position.

'Reliability' also means something different in qualitative than in quantitative research. Here, we are talking more about the extent to which the research process is described step by step, thereby providing an opportunity to understand how the process has gone forward. Good descriptions make the research transparent, which in turn provides the opportunity for critical appraisal.

Validity' in qualitative research is replaced by the term 'generalisability'. This refers to the extent to which the argument and key findings of a project retain their validity in other contexts. For an evaluation to be defined as research-based, it should have a generalisability or validity beyond simply the one question concerned.

In this evaluation, a sample of informants in the operational police were interviewed about what they remembered from the period of temporary arming of the police force. Verifying their answers and reflections about what they experienced at that time is difficult. Ideally, the evaluation would have taken place during or immediately after this period, so that reflections would have had less opportunity to be coloured by the passage of time. (Many of the questions and the specific events used to elicit clarification of behaviours and situations perhaps appeared a little diffuse to the informants because it was all 'a long time ago'). It was also clear that some of the answers from the informants were coloured by the ongoing discussion within the police about permanent arming of the police.

Another requirement for the scientific nature of a work is that it must be widely available and disseminated in a scientific community where input and criticism are possible. The client has set no limits to, for instance, the use of the data from the survey. Also, for an evaluation to be considered research-based, it is a requirement that the data collection is made using scientific methods. This evaluation is based on a traditional qualitative interview design (Grønmo, 2016; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010; Postholm, 2005).

2.2.1. Conduct of the survey and selection of informants

We had from the beginning of September to mid-December to complete the data collection. We chose to proceed through the management at the different police districts, getting from them the name and date of with whom and when interviews could take place. This was mainly to save time. We see this as unproblematic because this topic did not appear to be sensitive in relation to either management or work colleagues. Apart from two, all the interviews were individual and were immediately anonymised. There were no questions about people or identifiable events in the interview guide. The management of the police districts had no involvement in, or influence on, the interviews. They saw the survey as relevant, but beyond that there was no, as far as we are aware, attempt to intervene or place guidelines on the interviews.

Given the way the mandate was operationalised, it was natural to interview operational police officers. We also chose interviewees drawn largely from outside Oslo because we saw, in going through the master's theses, and other relevant research, that Oslo police district is much used in research on this subject. We received clear feedback that the informants valued the opportunity to present their point of view. They were also pleased with breaking the 'Oslo domination' of this topic.

2.2.2. The interviews

All the interviews, apart from that with the two informants working in Oslo with crime prevention, were conducted in the place of work. The interviews were conducted in parallel, in separate rooms, and lasted between 50 and 70 minutes.

Setting the scene for an interview involves defining the interview situation – what the interview will be about, clarification of the role of interviewee and researcher, and so on (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, p. 141). This introductory phase is important in creating the necessary trust in the interviewee. We therefore used a good deal of time to inform and to introduce the evaluation project. The informants had not been prepared, in concrete terms, about the content of the interviews, and many had

only been told to present themselves on time because there were ‘some researchers who were to ask ‘something about arming the police’.

It was important to get the informants to relax and respond based on what they thought was important. We took time to tell them that, now, it was the voice of the police that was to be heard and that all answers were of equal importance; that we had neither pre-decided on, nor were looking for, certain views. We chose, therefore, to begin the interview with a completely open question to everyone, which, in part, drew on general considerations about the period of temporary arming of the police. This so that the informants could ‘talk themselves warm’ about completely subjective viewpoints. If the informants, in answering this question, touched on the matters in the interview guide, we followed these up then and there. The interviews were therefore not fully structured. They were also not fully structured in the sense that the important themes did not always emerge in the ‘right order’. This held no significance for the quality of the answers. By ordering the interview situation in a very open and confidential atmosphere, it was always possible to return to questions to get an elaboration of an earlier answer.

The interview guide represented an ‘operationalisation’ of the mandate and was adapted to the various roles within the police held by the interviewees. The questions were therefore partly open and partly factual. We used a more in-depth questioning technique when it came to questions about *planning* and *management* of operations. It was necessary to clarify the meaning of some questions – particularly those relating to ‘*risk*’ and ‘*communication of risk*’. With hindsight, we can see that these questions might have been better formulated as questions about specific cases: we could have described a classic situation and asked to what extent planning, implementation et cetera of such an operation were affected by officers being armed (cf. Sandham & Todnem, 2016). Our asking informants about their *understanding of concepts* or: “What for you falls within the concepts of risk and risk communication?” was not well understood. We often received: “*What do you mean by that?* - and similar in response. The extent to which we should have been aware of this issue in advance is a discussion of *evaluation-specific competency* (Sverdrup,

2014, p. 170). Although, in the Results section of this report, we are unable to offer complete answers to these questions, this experience was, in itself, a discovery. We will return to this at the end of the report.

Weaknesses in the interview guide could have been avoided had a pilot study been conducted to test it. The time available, however, unfortunately did not allow this. Much of what is touched on here is insight and findings arising from the subsequent analysis. Another example is the apparent agreement that the police should be permanently armed. This agreement holds across geography, service role, gender and age. Moreover, many of the justifications were the same – *“being prepared for the worst”*, *“not having to rush back to the car from the sixth floor of a tower block”*, *“access to all the tools in the toolbox”*, were repeated explanations as to why the police should be armed. That many answered in the same way might represent a weakness in the interviews in the sense that they failed to identify nuances within the answers. On the other hand, the unanimity that has ‘arisen’ invites us to ask new questions such as: How has this consensus arisen? What are the cultural or social processes accounting for this? Towards the conclusion of this report, we turn our attention to these questions.

2.2.3. Document analysis

Using the Police Directorate’s documents and the reports submitted to them as data involves both strengths and weaknesses. When it comes to gaining an overview of the number and type of serious incidents related to weapons handling, it is advantageous that POD has the authority to require the police districts to report these. On the other hand, although the police districts and specialist agencies were required to report unintentional firings and attempts to take an officer’s weapon from them, we cannot overlook possibility that there are incidents that have not been reported, leaving an underreporting. This may be the case particularly where attempts to take an officer’s weapon from them is concerned. What is seen as amounting to attempting to take a weapon and what is worth reporting varies. This problem of definition does not apply to accidental discharges, and more reliable reporting is needed. However, it

cannot be disregarded that there are incidents of this kind that have gone unrecorded, especially in the period when reporting was not mandatory, but also in the period when the police districts have been required to do so. Such incidents have to be first registered, and then a report has to be sent through the system where it has the possibility of 'falling out' at various points along the way. That said, had we mapped this ourselves, through a survey or analysis of HSE reports for example, it would have taken much longer and probably not given us a significantly better overview.

From correspondence between POD and the police districts, we learn something about the management's perspective on the challenges the police had with the implementation and conduct of the temporary general arming of their officers. The correspondence cannot simply be used to confirm or check the findings of the interviews, but it can supplement their findings and give us a broader and better perspective on the period of temporary, general arming of the police service.

There are other weaknesses associated with the correspondence between the police districts and POD. Even though each district and specialist agency was asked the same questions, there are significant differences in how comprehensively they answered. Some districts answered POD's questions with 'yes' or 'no', or with a bare minimum of words. Others replied in a more comprehensive and nuanced way. Some didn't answer at all. As one can see in Point 3.7, we must assume that, to a large extent, the police districts answering 'no' to the question inquiring if being armed revealed a need for further training, would have agreed that there is a need to develop training programmes regarding techniques for making an arrest while armed. That so many of the answers were so short and lacking any detail, obviously weakens their informational value and their usefulness in a research context.

3. Result

The following presentation of the results is based on, and follows, the layout of the interview guide; the questions were operationalised from the mandate for the evaluation.⁸ The mandate says:

- What significance had being armed for the police's contact with the public? Including how responding officers approached the public, how they behaved in large crowds, were there situations they avoided, how being armed affected officers' feelings of safety (positively, negatively) after taking into account their attitude to being armed.
- What effect had being armed on officers' risk assessment, communication of risk (between themselves and the control room, and between themselves, including the response team leader) and their perception of risk.
- What effect had being armed on the police's tactical handling of incidents, including planning, management, disposition of resources, skills and use of protective equipment?
- What was the extent of serious incidents related to weapons handling (such as accidental discharge, attempts to take a loaded weapon from an officer and possibly others) during the period of being temporarily armed?

The work of evaluation took as its point of departure the identification of the experiences and views of, and points to be learnt from, the temporary, general arming of the police force explicable in terms of the roles of the informants. It was a working hypothesis in the development of the interview guide that those with responsibility for crime prevention would likely have a different view of the issues around being armed than operational personnel. During the interviews, these working hypotheses

⁸ The interviews are written and presented in a very 'idiomatic' way. This has been chosen in an attempt to reproduce the 'feel' of the interviews. In some of the quotes from the interviews (...) appears, signifying that some text has been omitted either because it is simply 'filler words' or because it, to some extent, revealed identity of location, for example. Square brackets ([]) indicate text added by the authors, either to clarify the text or to replace identifying elements of the text. The quoted interview texts are italicised to more clearly distinguish them from other quoted text in the report. Interview subjects are identified by means of the abbreviation of their role. In a few cases, they are described as IP1 and IP2 – this refers to the interviews where they were interviewed jointly.

were quickly 'shot down'. The informants were largely unanimous and shared much the same thoughts about the interview topics. There was essentially little identifiable difference in their responses in terms of seniority, role or gender.

There may be several explanations for this. Firstly, it may be that there is broad unanimity about these matters, and it may be that the period of being armed has further strengthened it. Another explanation could be that, by means of the interview guide, we failed to ask questions that elicited natural differences of opinion. It could also be that the sample of informants was poorly composed so that the evaluation failed to identify these differences. However, similar findings from other surveys with representative samples show that there is indeed a considerable degree of agreement among police officers regarding the issue of being armed. Towards the end of this report we, therefore, discuss our own findings against other key works in the field.

Another widespread finding is that fear of terror attack and of police being its possible target played only a small part in their attitude toward being armed. As this evaluation indicates, the temporary period of being armed has either confirmed a perception among police officers that the police should be permanently armed, or the doubters have become far less doubtful. This is based on ordinary operative police duties and incidents relating to those. Terrorism and organised crime were little cited as grounds for permanent arming of the police force.

If our investigation - like many of the other research papers we referred to in the Introduction - has found the police to be unanimous and cohesive regarding the question of being armed, an analysis should be made of the processes that led to such a clear consensus. More on this later in the report.

The informants had much they wanted to say about the question of being armed. It should not be thought that the answers were 'right' or 'wrong', rather that the matter was something they thought about and were engaged with. There was agreement that the police had managed

the temporary arming well, scepticism had been 'put to shame' and they were now ready to be permanently armed. It was especially important for the informants that the police had, now, to be given an opportunity to undertake the task that society expects of them. As one put it:

The civilian nature has nothing to do with whether we've a gun on our hip or not, it has to do with the way we deal with the public we come into contact with, and how we talk to them. (...) There's also something about knowing that if there's a need for us to do the job we're supposed to do and protect the life and health of the people, then we can do so without spending unnecessary time in arming ourselves.

But there were also those in our material who wanted a more nuanced and maybe more subdued debate around being armed. One informant, working with youngsters on crime prevention, in a young people's milieu, pointed out that it can be difficult to present a balanced view when everyone is discussing it on the basis of the 'worst case theory':

F: If you're on the right forums, then it's kind of taboo to talk about it, so to say; I'm completely against being armed, when it comes to keeping the peace and so on, but then there are strong personalities with lots of experience, who've lived through a good deal, who you have to respect (...) Me and my partner are two of those who dare to (...) have a bit more nuanced view, about this, but it's got to be OK anyhow to be a bit more nuanced, but it's been difficult (...) to put forward arguments against those who do nothing but come with worst case scenarios all the time, that; why shouldn't I have a gun on me in case I need it? End of, right. But then there's that police work in different ways – we work with youngsters, we work with crime prevention, our job is to stop things from happening, and we need to be at their level, right – and we get feedback from them that it's, in fact, a bit more scary to talk to us when we've got guns.

3.1. Generally about being armed

We began each interview by inviting the interviewee to express some general comments regarding their experience of having been armed. A not overly specific introductory question was a good way of establishing a trusting atmosphere where the interviewee found themselves suddenly 'centre stage'. In answering an open question, the interviewee could 'find their feet' in the interview situation.

Everyone was pleased with the way the police had coped with the temporary period of being armed. A typical answer was this we received from a control room supervisor to the question of how (s)he thought it had gone:

OL: I think it went pretty well, surprisingly so if I can say that. We didn't notice any great difference from the control room point of view, so I think it went just fine.

A response team leader, asked the same introductory question was quick to come to the heart of the matter and the uncertainties associated with being armed:

IL: What should I say about this then? I thought it was a good time here at work (...) I felt that perhaps (...) that it didn't lead to such big changes in the daily duties as I (...) had expected (...). We had our feelers out in those first weeks (...) what was the public's reaction? What was our reaction? (...) But when things sorted themselves out (...) so I felt (...) that things (...) came together, and that we never forgot (...) that you had (...) a weapon there (...) but (...) you came to realise, that [you] must just conduct [yourself] as usual, and it would go very well (...) One had a general feeling of safety (...) you felt that you had an extra remedy (...) it [was] very safe-making for us to know that if a man with an axe came and tried to kill us, we had something to hit back with, I was about to say, but, really, it calmed itself down pretty quickly and, it turned out that we had weapons on our belt and that that was completely OK, yes.

An officer with special responsibility for crime prevention answered:

F: It was completely positive. Most people didn't notice until we ourselves brought it up and then there were some questions about it. Mostly when there was a parents' meeting, but no one was directly negative about it. So it was, in a way, just a natural part of the rest of our kit. When we are giving a talk, or should we say talking to children – either in nursery or in primary school or secondary school - then we have all our equipment on us - in the form of our kit and that kind of thing because that is, they think, a part of the trust-building work and, not least: how are the police dressed when they are at work? We also talk a little about it, say a bit about what the different things are, and we like to have an extra set of handcuffs with us because handcuffs are very popular to try even in upper secondary school. And even here it was yes, I am – the police are in a period when we are armed and so we have weapons with us. We didn't, of course, show the weapons in the same way as the other equipment, but it felt natural to say that, yes, we also have guns.

Some of the answers came as a surprise to us. What much of the discussion is preoccupied with - possibly a preconception within the research community - is the danger of a more distanced police force. Carrying weapons into a meeting with the public might mean that officers automatically chose to keep their distance, because there is a pronounced fear of weapons being taken from them. Some of the answers gave a completely different view of this. One of our informants put it like this:

IP1: Yes, so I thought at least that my mind was clearer. Another thing as well is that I dared to go further away from the car than before. In relation to that, foot patrols are very well suited to making contact with the public, you see a lot, and it is easier for them to get away and to make contact. And for some people there has been an argument around that: what if something happens and then I have to run a kilometre back to the car to fetch my weapon? And now you knew: so, it's not as dangerous as before. So, I think, that, in any case, the threshold for going out on foot patrol is lower when you have with you everything that's needed.

Those who had entered the service recently also found being armed to be positive, not limiting their capacity to do their job. As an IP put it:

IP: I still had good contact with those I met, I could still talk to youngsters, I could still go to the home of those who had had a break-in, could still talk to them and (...) there was no focus on my carrying a weapon. It wasn't like they were asking about this weapon and were concerned about it instead of what I was there to do.

3.2. The police's meeting with the public

3.2.1. In general

What significance had being armed for the police's contact with the public?

This was an overarching and far-reaching question in our evaluation work. The question was broken down, or operationalised, into the following parts: *how emergency officers approached the public, how they conducted themselves in large crowds, were there situations they avoided and did being armed affect their feelings of being safe (positively, negatively) once their attitude to being armed is taken into consideration.*

In general, there was only a small 'spread' in the answers. By and large, everyone agreed that they had not changed their behaviour to any significant degree when meeting the public. No one could say that the public had had a significant reaction, either negative or positive, to their being armed.

In the interviews, we asked the control room supervisors if they had received advice, guidance or 'warnings' about undertaking this kind of duty, and we asked to what extent they had received feedback on this. One answered:

OL: No, I've talked a bit with some of the operational officers about how they feel about going into large groups of people, or into nightclubs where people are tightly packed together, and they say

(...) that it's no different, but (...) that they maybe think a little bit more about that they are armed (...) that they're perhaps a bit more aware of what's going on around them, and that they (...) maybe are better at using the tactics they've learned, or should have learned. I think it would be – now, I'm not operational anymore so I'm not armed - but that it would be uncomfortable, in terms of how you carry that weapon.

Another control room supervisor had a comparable viewpoint:

I: Did you get any feedback on your police crews, if they behaved... was there a different approach?

OL: No (...) they had an ongoing dialogue with the incident commander about how they handled their assignments and especially how they went into confined spaces where there were lots of people, if they had to create distance, because that was what I envisioned as being most problematic in relation to drunk people on a Saturday night, keeping them at a good arm's length.

3.2.2. How have emergency officers behaved in large crowds of people?

A central question is the extent to which the temporary, general arming of the police affected the way the police behaved in large crowds. As our interview questions show, we used groups of young people, music festivals and gatherings outside restaurants after closing time as examples.

Many informants found, in the early phase of the period of carrying arms, that they were preoccupied with the security of their weapon and were aware of how they stood or moved when among larger crowds. It was, at first, an awareness of safety and the use of discretion in approaching the public, but no one said that the gun prevented them from entering, or seemed grounds for not entering, into situations which were potentially challenging but where there was no question of using firearms. Most thought that it was a question of habituation, until the firearm became

simply a part of their equipment. Some were concerned about how they should present themselves in relation to the public, so that the weapon did not attract undue attention or become vulnerable to being taken by others.

IP: Basically, I don't feel that it had such a big impact on what I did (...) Sure, if we were going into a place where we knew there were large crowds, a home-alone party perhaps, then you had a little more focus on knowing that [the weapon] was there, without it having anything to do with the way I made contact with the people there (...). So, where we feel that [the weapon] doesn't need to attract attention, so you can just position yourself a bit differently so that it doesn't become the focus.

//

IL: Yes, (...) there was a tricky moment, we have to be honest and say that; in the dark down in a nightclub with a mass of people then I know between me and myself that I always had my hand on the weapon, and I know that there were very many who also had. (...) We had discussions about disarming or not when it was that kind of event [a music festival for instance] (...) so then it became very difficult in the end because it is precisely these kinds of events where we should be prepared in case [there] was an attack on them (...). So, if there was (...) something that made it difficult, so it was especially those occasions where (...) I think as well that (...) assignments where you were knew that here you have to have a physical confrontation, the type of mentally ill patient that you know that (...) there'll be fisticuffs this time and ... situations where we sometimes (...) asked (...) if we could be unarmed, because we knew that; we go in, he's unarmed, I'm going to win the fight using softer methods, so we can as well set aside our weapons. So, I heard that (...) over the radio, people asking the control room supervisor if they could be unarmed because it was that kind of situation.

On ordinary operative duties, many wanted to be armed, even though the weapon could be a hindrance in any ensuing confrontation.

For most people who worked closely with the public, these answers came in slightly differing variants.

IP: (...) You know, of course, that you have a weapon on your hip and clearly you may've held a hand near the weapon, and you're aware of how you position yourself in relation to large crowds (...). But it's not the case that I avoided situations because I had a weapon.

I: Do you think that you approach them in a different way?

IP: Yes, as I said (...) I used to have a hand resting on the holster.

However, the vast majority were clear that they had not approached the public in a different way.

IP1: No, nothing is different there. There was a lot of stuff written in the press that the public was going to distance themselves, especially maybe the elderly and children, but I didn't notice anything like that.

I: But you then? Did you keep some extra distance? Did you go into a situation in just the same way? Were you more careful when you were out on patrol?

IP1: No (...) but it does become routine when – for example – you get out of the patrol car and you check that the locking flap of the holster is closed, little things like that, but otherwise no changes.

I: Nothing like that you kept your distance?

IP1 & IP2: No.

I: Kept your distance? Are you sure about that? Would the public say the same?

IP1: Yes, I think so.

Nor had the incident commanders had experience of approaching the public or of planning things differently on account of being armed:

I: OK, a question about – were there situations you didn't get involved in because you were armed or that you solved by....

IL: No, there weren't. I can't recall that during that time either me or my team avoided getting involved because they were armed, no.

For IP, the reaction of the public was the complete opposite of what they had expected. There was no distancing between them and the public because of their being armed, almost the opposite. The carrying of weapons created interest and became a topic of conversation with members of the public. One IP's response to a question about the public's reaction was:

IP: It was just the same, didn't notice any difference. And we talked about it a bit in the beginning before we began with it (...) those who opposed it were like; now there'll be distance, now people won't dare approach us, (...) but I noticed more the opposite, that people were curious and came over (...) yes, there wasn't any higher threshold for coming into contact with us at all.

3.2.3. Were there situations that officers avoided?

A central question for the evaluation was whether being armed led to a different approach to incidents or to the public, and if there were certain situations which the police did not engage with in the same way as they would have done had they been unarmed. This question also received very similar answers across the different roles within the service. The following three answers are representative:

I: And there were no incidents or situations which you avoided on account of being armed? Or tried to avoid?

F: No, but nor were there [either] those where (...) we went in more aggressively. (...) I think that we in crime prevention had a slightly

different approach to that of the public order boys sometimes (...), we take a bit more time over things and (...) the weapon I don't think (...) came up as quickly. Some of the instructors who come in once a year and train us on something have a different approach – that when you first are armed on an assignment, you should in a way make use of it, but that's not how it works for the rest of us.

//

I. With regard to the public, were there some situations that one, like, avoided because they were armed?

F: I wasn't involved in anything like that, but I can imagine situations where there would at least have been more of you when you went in, but there as well you had the possibility of disarming yourself. So, there was room to report in that 'for this or that reason' you choose to disarm, and that's an assessment you had to make right then and right there. Being armed wasn't because - what shall I say – that there was thought to be any greater threat from the public, it was, of course, not to do with those duties, it had to do with terrorism and there was, there was the possibility to disarm where our duties allowed.

//

I: Just to carry on with what we were talking about, were there situations that one positively avoided in the time you were carrying weapons?

IL: My impression is, I mean I didn't experience that myself, that we avoided anything in particular, we didn't do that, and if there was a particular incident we didn't want to do, we could just as well have done it the other way, I mean unarmed. That was always a possibility.

3.2.4. Has being armed affected officers' feeling of safety?

Does being armed lead to service personnel feeling more secure, or is the weapon a signal to the wider world that leads to them feeling less safe? The perceptions and attitudes toward arming expressed in our interviews were marked by the period of temporary arming having seen no major negative events. When we, in the interviews and therefore after the event, asked about this feeling of safety, many of the answers were based on 'everything having gone OK'.

I: And this last question you have probably answered a bit, but (...) did being armed affect officer's feelings of safety in any directions, that's either positively or negatively?

II: Yes, well my view is, I wasn't a supporter before, but I am now because of the feeling of safety it gives and because of the extra possibility it seemed to me to represent. (...) the lawmakers have, in a way, said that in the most time-critical situations where you maybe need it the most, they've (...) taken it away from us. It's in the car. And I've never had the feeling before, but I felt it on many occasions that; this here was in fact pretty safe and good.

The feeling of safety associated with weapons was about their accessibility and the opportunity to have them with you at all times, but also about routines and getting used to their use in different situations. The discussion around being, and the desire to be, armed is often about the unforeseen, having the opportunity to use weapons when what cannot be planned for occurs.

I: Do you think that being armed has affected officers' sense of safety?

II: I think that's quite clear. I think that obviously it has. They handle the weapon every day and you aren't at a shooting range. (...) Now that we have the de-cocking boxes and (...) you see that people feel more secure in being able to do it in (...) such a way. And I think as well (...) that when people are used to carrying a

weapon all the time, it creates a feeling of safety in the work you're undertaking (...) it's not like you have it with you just because now we're maybe faced with this or that [difficult incident], but it's now a tool you have with you the whole time and it creates safety both in the carrying and the use of it.

I: Do you think that it can lead to situations escalating?

IL: (...) *It was when we didn't have the temporary arming like we do now, and had to ask to be armed, and then (...) maybe especially the younger officers got themselves a bit fired up sometimes, but when you have the weapon on you the whole time (...) then it's the situation you're engaged in and not the weapon that's the focus.*

I: You've talked a bit about feelings of safety, but do you think that being armed has anything to say about how you, and those under you, perceived risk in the, in your assignments?

IL: *I don't think there was any change in risk-taking, if that's what we're talking about, nor that it was an extra risk, that it was dangerous to be armed in a particular situation. As I, personally, have found it to be, and as I've found it to be among those I've worked alongside, it's been nothing other than a safety. I've never heard that it raised the level of risk or that I went into a situation I maybe wouldn't have gone into if I hadn't been armed.*

I: You felt safer when going into incidents?

IL: *They felt safer, like for example in an ordinary house break-in, you know that, OK, if it gets out of hand, I've my weapon with me rather than having to run back to the car to fetch it and, so, yes.*

I: But can you say somehow, both of you then, that views on whether to be armed, or not armed, have changed as a result of this temporary period of being armed? In any direction, can you say? It can be that you've become more positive or negative.

IP1: *I've certainly become more positive and certain, and it's mostly because I see that we're coping with it without things being worse. There's been no escalation of incidents and none of that where I've had to run back to the car for weapons. When you knock on the door and the first you hear is that if you come in I'll blow your head off its unbelievably miserable to run down three flights of stairs while your colleague is stood by the door (..), but it's changed most because, I've been sceptical about people's handling of weapons and use of weapons, that (...) there'd be more use of them, but what I see is that it's not like that and then I think we need the tool.*

The feeling of safety hinged on being able to meet a threat and to be able to defend oneself. We asked about weapons and whether a sense of security was, possibly, a result of experiences in the service. A crime-prevention officer responded as follows:

I: *You haven't been in situations where you had to shoot?*

F: *No, but I'm concerned about that, I'm concerned that those who're out and about on duty be able to defend both themselves and others if they find themselves in such a situation.*

I: *Have you had episodes where you might have wished that you could shoot?*

F: *No, I've the gift of the gab, I've solved many, I've almost never fought even though I've been 20 years in the job.*

One aspect of the feeling of safety was therefore about being able to face a threat and being able to defend oneself.

Whether being armed made officers feel safe, had much to do with how experienced they felt in weapons handling, and this was often raised ahead of any mention of insecurity out on duty among the public.

Weapons were little used during the temporary period of being armed, and the number of incidents related to accidental discharge of weapons

and other situations of risk was seemingly within the limits of what our informants thought was to be expected:

I: Has the period of being armed changed your view on being armed or is it as before?

II: It's the same as before. That's I think that we should be permanently armed. It's only been reinforced because I saw the positive (...) there was lots of talk about weapons being fired accidentally, but we've had accidental discharges long before the temporary arming. (...) It's something to do with the training that maybe we should've had, and on the guidelines and the provisions made. In other words what provision is made for making the weapons safe (...) it's made me think that, yes, we may need to pay more attention to this, even though we haven't had any accidental discharges here at the station.

I: Yes, one needs to think through how this can be prevented.

II: Yes, how we can prevent it, because we're no better than the worst apple in the basket and then we've to think that, OK, now we actually have people who don't carry arms that often anyway and then we've to make sure that we've arranged things so that at least we can avoid such cases. For there'll always be accidental discharges, it's just important to make sure that they happen in the safest possible way.

The way in which officers' sense of safety was affected by carrying weapons was a question that could be answered in different ways. For many, it was the weapon itself that created the sense of safety in any given situation, whilst, at the same time, carrying weapons left them sharper and more alert whilst on assignments. In hindsight, we can also see that the answer below, given by an IP, was a view of the general arming drawing on the fact of all 'having gone well', and that being armed was therefore, in retrospect, seen in a very positive light.

I: Did you feel that being armed affected, shall we say, your feeling of safety in these kinds of situations, your own?

IP: Do you mean my own feeling of safety? Yes, there were a number of situations where we sat afterwards and were grateful that we'd been armed, had the temporary right to carry arms, there were lots of those, I can't recall even a single occasion when we wished, in a way, that we hadn't had that, that it'd been a hindrance, or that I'd worried about it. Not that I remember in any case, now that (...) especially on assignments that turned out to be very different when we arrived than when we were first notified, you get a message and when you're there it's, then it was, often something completely different than what you first get the impression of, often more of a threat to us and then it was good in a way, when you stood in a block and had the car down below and you knew at least that you had the help close by if things should suddenly change. So, I was, at least, very happy about that.

I: You've already told us, by way of introductory remarks, if the temporary armament affected your view of armament.

*IP: Yes, it certainly has. It's not that I was against being armed, but I was perhaps a bit more sceptical than now, because I thought that it'd be more of a hindrance than perhaps it was, so in that way I've changed my view somewhat, but, as I've said, I wasn't ever altogether on the other side, but now I notice that I'm very much for being armed again in terms of feeling unsafe, now, now I'm not feeling so insecure. **I: Being permanently armed?** Yes, that's it. In a way, I see lots of advantages to it, and few disadvantages.*

Response time is most often mentioned when a sense of safety and attitude toward permanent general arming of the service is asked about. The IPs we interviewed jointly gave typical answers on how being temporarily armed affected their attitude - the period had either confirmed a positive attitude to permanent general arming or changed their attitude in that direction:

I: What was that led you to change your mind?

IP2: *No, I can't really remember (...) any specific event, it's more that it built up. (...) I'm in favour of being armed (...). I think it's wrong that we could find ourselves in a situation where someone points a weapon at us – I'm speaking about the most extreme circumstances here – without us being able to do anything about it. Either at us or at the public. And there're lots of other things (...) such as response-time and the amount of time it takes us to ready ourselves for an assignment. I don't have any specific example in mind, I mean there's no one episode that caused me to change my attitude, but it's grown over time.*

IP1: *As an example, there was somebody who rang in and said that he had a Sami knife and was thinking of going down to the square and stabbing everyone around him (...) and I felt, at that time, while we stood there and should up with the key and up with the box and putting on all of our kit, I hoped that by the time we got there he hadn't gone too far and injured too many people before we arrived. And we put on our equipment, and we armed ourselves and when we came, we kind of drove towards the square thinking we could drive towards him to catch him while he was on his way. The problem was that he'd already come all the way down to the square, so that I'm very happy that we managed to get there in time. But that's how it is, sometimes it's maybe seconds that matter. And in relation to the system of storing weapons locked in the car, there are many who say that; yes, but you'll often get arms in an incident if you need it, but I also have many experiences where you (...) don't get a weapon, even when the conditions in the Weapon Instructions are met. (...) (...) So that when we were permanently armed, it was a safe feeling to know that when the message comes, you avoid (...) as we do today, maybe having to go on a bit about: Is it a knife? Are there weapons? Are there things? And then maybe having to argue with a manager; it's not every time that we manage to get a weapon when we want it. (...) This isn't to say that we'll use the weapon because we have it with us, but there's something about knowing that; OK, I'm ready for*

whatever comes. And like, now, a month or so ago we got, there was a message about domestic violence, and on the stairs - we don't have much in the way of high-rise buildings here, but it was on the way up to the fourth floor - and we'd reached the second floor before we got the message that: yes, the person had a knife. A big carving-knife. By then, it's clear that it's gone too far - we can't run all the way back to the car to fetch weapons. So that means that we have to go in with one thing less on our belt, in our toolbox. Luckily, it went well, but...

From some of those occupying other roles in the service we got, however, a clear answer that being armed was not something they welcomed. As we see from the interview quote below, UP saw it as unnecessary to go armed in the course of their daily duties:

I: Has being temporarily armed during the recent period affected your view of being armed, and in which direction?

UP: No, not mine. It hasn't affected me at all. I've held the view all along that I'd rather be unarmed. But that doubtless has to do with my doing what I do. I tend to feel that UP shouldn't have, that we can have pre-stored weapons - the gun in the box, but to go with weapons, to be armed, there I haven't... I don't agree with it. I think ... yes, of course, if you ask someone with thirty years in the job, you'll likely get a different answer, but for me, who has all of age, long service and experience, I think that. I don't think it's necessary. And, there again, there's probably something regional, where you work obviously matters. Criminality obviously differs from police district to police district and, yes, things can happen wherever and whenever, but, ideally, I think that UP should be unarmed.

This was the reason given by several others based mostly on practical considerations. On the face of it, this could seem a little surprising as UP meet a very wide spectrum of the public and has in recent years intensified its efforts in relation to crime fighting beyond purely traffic offences.

As the weapon should only be used in a situation where all other means have already been tried, this question of security might seem a little difficult for someone to grasp at first. Serious incidents, which the interviewee himself had not been involved in, were often used as examples of the importance of weapons - such as ‘the shooting episode in Hedmark where a police officer was shot’.⁹ Personally experienced situations where weapons might have been used, but were not, were cited as examples of how arming was important because an aspect of that situation was reminiscent of other serious incidents (that they themselves had played no part in) – that is, an appeal to a form of ‘worst case thinking’:

IP: (...) For instance, I was at work in [the town] centre, on night patrol, and we’d closed off the entire area because there were so many people, and so there comes a car driving ‘full tilt’ (...) and it wasn’t that long after that stuff in Nice, and then, like, then you get to thinking that you haven’t got a weapon, and we talked about this afterwards. It was only a woman who had got it into her head that there’d been a death on the other side of town, it was ‘crazy’ then, and she’d gone flat out throughout the whole town, but then somehow you just think; shit, here, think if it was that, and you also had to..., at least at night in [town] then we’re often far away from the cars and you don’t stop a car with just your fists and then you’re, you kind of feel more that you would’ve failed a bit as a police officer if you hadn’t managed to stop that car. Had you been armed... had it been an actual situation in which someone was out to run down as many people as possible and you had to dash fifty metres down to the car, so....

I: Would you have shot or - if you had a weapon?

IP: Yes, I’d have shot.

⁹ This episode is described in *Politiform* no. 9, 2016, pp. 10-31. The incident occurred during the period of temporarily armed police, and the ‘moral’ of the story seems to be that things could have gone much worse had they not been armed.

I: So, if you'd have stood there and waved her down and she hadn't responded...

IP: I'd have shot at the tyresNo, not then.

I: Not in just that situation?

IP: No, I wouldn't have shot.

I: Not even the tyres?

IP: No, I wouldn't, People managed to jump out of the way and ...

I: It could have gone really badly

IP: Yes, it could, it was ugly.

I: But you say that you wouldn't have shot, but you want to be armed you say?

IP: Yes, but you can see if it's someone out to get people, or someone short of time. Yes. Or who's lost the plot completely.

Both the safety of their partner and the ability to carry out their service to the community were important reasons for younger officers being in favour of being armed:

IP: What can one say? I qualified [from PHS] in 2012 so it isn't exactly that I've a long... four years... (...) [but] you've all the same been involved in quite a bit and experienced several times how unbelievably quickly things turn. From being completely under control to being suddenly a completely different situation. And if you know that you can look after your colleagues and yourself, as well as the public, I think that was good (...). It's no guarantee, of course, that things'll go well, but all the same it's an extra tool and it increases the chance of being able to react in the way the situation demands.

3.2.5. The police holster and a 'bullet in the chamber'

Normally, the police carry handcuffs, a telescopic baton and pepper spray attached to their belt. This is often referred to as their 'rig'. This rig is designed to ensure both the police officer's own safety and to enable the police to resolve 'difficult situations.' As well as these things hanging from their belt, the police routinely wear a light vest which is protective, especially against sharp objects.

The period of being temporarily, generally armed was repeatedly extended. A consequence of this was that a discussion arose as to whether the existing police equipment was suitable for being permanently generally armed with handguns. Both weapon and holster are normally items the police use for shorter periods when the order to be armed has been given. During the temporary arming, the weapon was to be carried at all times, and it became clear that a holster hanging low on the thigh was not really suitable for daily use (cf. letter from POD dated 23rd November 20 discussed in Point 1.2.). We asked questions about this change to the equipment and especially whether this had affected the officers in their meeting with the public. After an episode in Stavanger where a person jumped over the counter at the police station and tried to snatch a weapon, there was discussion about whether the police should continue to have a 'bullet in the chamber' or whether bullets should be held in the magazine instead, requiring the gun to be cocked before it could be fired. This became a major debate in the media, but our impression was that our informants were less affected by it. Holsters and bullets in the chamber were largely issues of practical routines for them. This was equipment not really intended for daily use, and not adapted to individual differences. During the period of being armed, the holster was placed on a belt so as not to hang so low on the thigh.

IP2: I can interject here, I don't have my belt on, but this isn't something that we're issued, that one there is not something that's handed out to us. On the other hand, I've one that can't be adjusted. Like when I need to have the heavy vest on, we're supposed to have the belt on the outside of the 'box' but then I have to stand there and manhandle it into place. That is because it is adjusted for normal use

here [touches his belt, but when you get extra equipment, an extra layer of protection, it gets tight. Another disadvantage, we're talking about the holster, the new one, which is what I experienced myself when driving in a car. It really gets in the way when you're seated, especially sitting in the front of the Passat, perhaps not so much in the Viteo, but in the Passat it's very uncomfortable.

UP: Yes, both yes and no. As I said before, I tried the hip holster, but then it was, when you add the belt, plus the rig, so the problem there again was that you (...) didn't sit correctly in relation to the use of seat belts and such. The seatbelt has to fit correctly if it's going to do its job hasn't it, and then it was, where it ... there was a lot, it became huge around your hips and that's where the problem lay, for very many of us. No, so that was of course a topic. I remember it very well, and maybe especially at the beginning, then it was unfamiliar, and you'd get used to it and you tried different types of holsters and... but then, we are adaptable, we accept a lot and then it's; Okay, that's how it is and we've to deal with it.

3.3. Risk assessment and the duty to act

3.3.1. in General

The mandate for this evaluation was also concerned that the following be investigated:

What significance did the period of being temporarily armed have for officers' risk assessments, their communication of risk (between the control room and the response personnel and between themselves, including the response leader) and perception of risk?

'Ordinary' people differ in their understanding of the idea of 'risk'. For some, 'risk' is the likelihood that an event will occur, for others 'risk' concerns the possible consequences of an event (Hellesø-Knutsen, 2013, pp. 61-62). A 'risk assessment' can have a three-step structure. The first concerns identifying the possible losses/gains, then an assessment of the likelihood of those losses/gains, and, finally, an assessment of the

significance of any loss/gain (Hellesø-Knutsen, 2013, p. 53). A basic assumption is that the police will be able to make risk assessments based on their professional insight in combination with varying degrees of experience. A discussion within 'risk research' concerns the extent to which experience and, in part, emotion are liable to influence risk assessment, and to what extent this is balanced by a professional analytic approach (Loewenstein, Weber, Hsee & Welch, 2001).

The mandate for this evaluation can therefore be understood as examining the extent to which the period of being armed affected processes seemingly central to operational police work. Was risk assessment affected by being armed such that police officers had a different perception of the potential outcome of a situation than they would otherwise have had? Was risk seen in relation to the criminal's or the police's safety? Did being armed affect the way risk was described or communicated? As the police were armed when they went into an incident, were other aspects of the assignment given emphasis? Did being armed impact the way an assignment was described, planned and implemented from the control room, out to the incident commander and from the incident commander on to the ordinary operational force? Is it conceivable, purely hypothetically, that when police are routinely armed, a more immediate response is expected leading to a lower degree of cooperation between several patrols, and so on? Or is it possible that risk becomes, to a greater extent, to do with the consequences of possible actions, that is, that risk is defined in relation to its consequences?

In the work of evaluation, we widened this out to include the duty to act.¹⁰ To what extent, if at all, did being armed influence the police's understanding of their duty to act? Normally, crews must ask to be armed, involving a time cost holding both positive and negative significance. It also involves a control room supervisor assessing the situation before the order to arm is given. In this delay, there is a possible safety, 'exempting'

¹⁰ 'The duty to act' is defined as: 'Interventions in ongoing life-threatening violence (PLIVO) will primarily prevent more people from suffering fatal injuries and provide life-saving medical treatment to those who have already been injured. These interventions are associated with an increased risk for emergency personnel.' (Norwegian Directorate for Civil Protection, Ministry of Health, Directorate of Police, 2015).

the individual from acting immediately. When permanently armed, this 'delay' disappears and the expectation may arise, both among the officers and the public, of immediate action. First, we take a closer look at the informants' understanding of 'risk' as a concept.

3.3.2. Risk

We started the interviews with an entirely open question about 'risk' and how the interviewee understood this concept. Quite surprisingly, many of them didn't have a clear view of it.¹¹ No one had a very clear understanding of what they thought about risk, or how they defined risk. This may have had something to do with the topic of the interview. Most of the responses quickly turned to their personal understanding of the risks associated with being armed. Risk was very often linked to personal safety and with being armed carrying certain risks where emptying the weapon et cetera were concerned. It was also a surprise that those working in UP quickly linked the concept of risk to their form of service: they perceived the weapon as a problem because it prevented the correct use of seat belts.

I. What do you include in the concept of 'risk'?

OL: Well, (...) if I think about risk then it's (...) you yourself are subject to risk, then the risk of being armed (...) accidental discharge (...) you have to assess risk from out of the individual competence of those using weapons (...) the keywords here are training and awareness in relation to daily use (...) no matter how much you train, there'll always be accidental discharges (...) there's a human factor that gets involved no matter how much you train, it happens in the special forces, it happens everywhere. So, no matter how much you practice, at some point you'll get accidental discharges whether you like it or not, it's the human factor. (...) So then, you must take it into account, (...) then it's important to have good routines so that [loading and unloading] happen in a safe place (...).

¹¹ Sandham & Todnem (2016, p. 96) found broadly the same.

We were also interested to discover if perception of risk had been altered in that the political justification for the temporary, general arming of the police was the terror threat against uniformed officers. One control room supervisor answered:

I: Have you the impression that being armed had any significance for how risk was perceived in the incidents that you then assigned?

OL: Well, I think maybe so, in the end (...) they felt a bit safer in having the weapon. That it was, that they had it, because the thing with being armed, and with getting to be armed has always been a process before and now they suddenly had them themselves and there wasn't such a fuss with it (...) but at the same time I don't know if it affected (...) their way of thinking about risk, that is if they (...) assessed the risk just as thoroughly because they knew they had a weapon there (...) the way I would think about it (...) is that you're not as thorough in your risk assessment because you have that security (...)

I: Did it affect your risk assessment (...) that, well, they are armed, so they can just go there?

OL: No.

We asked the same question of informants occupying each role and found that the incident commanders also had no particularly clear or settled grasp of the concept of risk.

I: When we talk about risk associated with the police's conduct of their duties, what sort of associations do you have? What do you associate with the word 'risk'?

IL: Yes, what do I include in that term? (...) In a way, it's (...) the dangers we choose to expose ourselves to in our work, because you can in a way choose to control some risks a little yourself I think, but

then there're other risks that you just have to accept in being in the police I think (...).

I: If we, in a manner of speaking, say that the risk associated with police duties is this ... even though there are two sides of the same coin, do you think that 'this' is primarily the risk to yourself or to the public?

IL: Yes, that's a split judgement, I think (...) clearly when we received our gun, that had something to do with the risk to ourselves, didn't it? We reduced, in a way, our own level of risk didn't we, for being subject to a suicide attack or that someone could come and... But I think that, at the same time, having the gun doesn't change the public's risk to the same degree because we'll be at [place] and the incident will happen at [place], won't it? And although we, in a way, secure ourselves, it can't be said that we protect others from incidents like that.

Certain of our informants experienced the weapon as directly risk reducing in the sense that it enabled the support called for in some situations:

I: It's written here in the question, even if you've already spoken about it quite a bit; had being armed any effect on the way you perceived risk in individual assignments?

IL: Really, what I think having sat and thought back to that time ... I ponder a bit about these cases where we were in doubt and we had a kind of discussion with the control room supervisor – maybe when a person was 'flagged up' as dangerous, you know, or a shovel was used in an act of violence, or a baseball bat – so then maybe you get into a discussion with the control room supervisor, should we arm ourselves, or not? But when you had it on your hip, and now I'm just being honest, maybe at fault in terms of Weapons Instructions and so on, but then it became like; OK, fine, if it should get so spicy that he actually came running after us with that bat there and started

knocking down my partner and is about to smash his head so well, then I'm ready. (...) all the same (...) I felt that we were really professional around just this (...) requesting to be armed in those assignments where it was natural to ask to be armed. And it was never done in an unserious way, it was, anyway, never something that was said by the control room or the team leader, that: well, you're armed anyway, aren't you? Stuff that, you have a gun on your hip. I never heard that sort of thing said anyway

We also asked the incident commanders about how they defined risk:

***I: If I ask you about the word risk, what does it mean to you?
(...)***

IP: Well, well its thinking about consequences – what might happen. On the basis of my choices and the choices and assessments of others.

I: What can happen or the consequences of what might happen?

IP: (...) What are the consequences of someone acting in a certain way? (...) But there's, the possibility of a loss, but there's also the possibility of a gain (...) risk is good within reasonable limits.

3.3.3. Communication of risk

As we indicated earlier, it was desirable that the evaluation show the extent to which the informants made changes to their communication of risk as a result of being temporarily armed. Were different matters given emphasis in the communication between the control room, incident commanders and operational officers? Was the information given to the response personnel by the control room whilst they were *en route* to an incident, and the questions coming back from them to the control room, different during this period? A widespread view among the informants was that nothing had changed. They obtained information from the control room supervisor as before. There was also agreement among the interview answers that they continued to prepare for assignments as was customary. The importance of observing the power pyramid was often

emphasised by our informants (cf. Lie & Lagestad, 2011) - proportionality in relation to use of force was important. What was highlighted by many was the benefit of not having to arm themselves by stopping the car and getting out the equipment and so on. When they were generally armed, they were free to concentrate on other aspects of an assignment.

I: But was there anything new? You say that you avoided getting armed. In a sense you took away the control room supervisor's 'second opinion', that happens, doesn't it, when you're already armed? The question then is: do you communicate about risk differently?

IP: No, it's the same I think, but at the same time you maybe do away with the focus on shall we put on our kit? Are the conditions met? Now, it's more like, OK, here's potential danger, we go in and we're ready.

I: Did you feel that it mattered, that the period of temporarily being armed mattered, to how you communicated with the control room and the response team leader in risky situations?

IP: I didn't feel that it changed the assessments we made because we often took them in consultation, just as we did before being routinely armed. The only difference, I felt, was that perhaps we went into some situations with a bit more safety maybe, because you felt that you had a kind of 'backup' in the form of the weapon should anything happen instead of hesitating and waiting for weapons to arrive, and then making some alternative plans if we did, I simply felt that we could act much faster, but also that when there were armed assignments and we knew we were coming to an armed counterpart so, in a way, we made the same assessments. I felt, there was no change there from before we were routinely armament versus when we were armed.

Communication between IL and OL were also something we explored in relation to communication of risk:

I: But do you see any benefits to the communication with the control room supervisor who takes the decisions?

*IL: Not where being armed itself is concerned, because most of the time we've to argue why. And it's always good to have a devil's advocate, for example, to come up with a good point, but this is often an acute situation, there and then, and we know from our experience and training what our choice is and what we think is important (...) it's fine [that] we have to explain ourselves (...) [have] a plan for what I'm going to do, but when I have to explain in detail why it's helpful to have an MP5 with me at an outdoor knife incident, for us who work out and about, it's obvious – there's a man with a knife, he can stand 30 metres away and then the handgun isn't good enough and if he stabs at people we have to run closer rather than maybe aiming a shot at that distance. When you then have to use capacity to explain such things, to the **control room supervisor** - which you have had to do many times then, as it was before, take it on further to a lawyer or chief of police, I don't see any benefit in that. It needs to be more that you are discussing the resolution of the incident, not the equipment.*

The incident commanders, in the same way as IP, believed that they had acted in the same way as before. Thoughts about carrying a weapon were primarily related to personal safety, especially having the weapon taken from you, and being able to protect one's partner's weapon in the event of serious incidents.

I: But when there was the period of being temporarily armed, was the communication into the control room supervisor different in any way, because you had weapons with you? Since you've brought it up?

IL; Yes, we did have weapons with us, as you say. In those cases where we'd normally have requested to be armed, we still had to make the request in order to use the more powerful weapons, but I wonder how many incidents were there where we requested weapons? I'm not sure about that but probably not so many since we had handguns with us and in eight out of 10 cases, we use handguns. Often, when we go in somewhere the more powerful guns are big and heavy but are really

much better weapons. I can't really say that communication was that much different.

I: Communication with your men when you were sending out patrols. Did you think differently when they were routinely armed than when they weren't? And in what way, if so?

IL: Yes, I did think a bit differently. I thought that if we'd two officers who are unsure about the use of weapons, handling weapons, then I'd like to put an experienced officer together with an inexperienced one to create greater safety in the patrol.

What about communication between the IP and the control room? An OL responded as follows:

I: What about 'communication of risk', was that different?

OL: No, I wouldn't say so. I mean the tactics stay the same. We don't change anything because you've a tool on your hip, we do just the same. The PBS [Police Emergency Preparedness System] applies just the same whether there is a temporarily armed police, or when being armed has to be requested from the Chief of Police.

The communication between IL and IP was also touched on in the interviews:

I: Where communication with your men who were being sent out to an incident was concerned, was that affected by us having a temporarily armed force?

IL: Not if it was an assignment I knew something about, then we had exactly the same approach as if there was weapons stored in the car, because then we all plan, and then we all discuss; do we need an MP5? Or do we need a handgun? Or do we need both?

An answer from an IP can be interpreted in two different ways. Seemingly, the quote below relates to resources; handguns versus both handguns

and MP5s. It can, however, also be understood as indicating that one did not request arming with an MP5 to avoid involving the control room supervisor in the risk communication prior to the assignment.¹²

IP1: Yes, but another thing here is that when you ask to be armed during an incident, so often you are asking to be armed with both kinds of weapon. Maybe half of the time someone has an MP5 on them. I know it's easier to make a hit with it. But what we saw now, or as I experienced with the permanent arming, was that one thought; no, we already have the gun, that'll do. Rather than going back into the old days and request arming with an MP5. It would've been easier to make a hit if something had happened.

During the interviews, we were also interested to hear if communication between partners changed or was affected by being armed:

I: Did the two of you, when you were partners in the same vehicle, communicate differently when you were armed than before you were armed?

IP1: No (...) there'll be many of the same things. So, (...) instead of driving and fretting (...) about whether: are the conditions fulfilled? So, it's: yep, here's an assignment we would've got permission to be armed for under the old rules (...).

3.3.4. The duty to act

General

In considering the way in which the temporary arming of the police affected officers' perception of risk, risk communication and risk assessment, the informants – primarily the ordinary operational officers – were asked if being armed had influenced their assessment of their duty to act, and especially whether they had lower expectations of reinforcements when they were armed. Although this wasn't directly required by the

¹² During the period of being temporarily, generally armed, officers still had to request permission to use machine guns (MP5). Reporting of the use of these weapons shows a marked downturn during this period.

mandate, it was a natural follow up question when exploring the topic of risk and communication of risk.

Undoubtedly, the police as a service, the various police units and the individual police officer are all obliged to act. It is seen as flowing from the police's societal duties; the police shall be 'a part of society's overall efforts to promote and consolidate citizens' legal rights, security and overall welfare in general' (Police Act, Section 1, second paragraph). This is developed further in the regulation of police duties in the Police Act, Section 2, where is stated that 'the police shall protect the person, property and common goods and protect all lawful enterprises, uphold public order and safety and, either alone or together with other authorities, protect public security throughout society from all that threatens it.' (Myhrer, 2005). However, more detailed legal determination of what this duty to act consists of, and how far it extends, is relatively weak (Auglend, 2016). Given that detailed specification of the duty to act is both unclear and fragmentarily regulated, we reproduce some of the most important aspects of it below

In relation to being armed, it will primarily be the duty to act in situations where there is reason to believe that serious physical violence may be used against a third party that is most relevant. In the *National procedure for the emergency services' cooperation in the event of ongoing life-threatening violence*, the duty to act is defined as: 'The response to ongoing life-threatening violence (PLIVO) shall primarily prevent more people from suffering fatal injuries and provide life-saving medical treatment to those already injured. This intervention is associated with an increased risk to responding personnel.' (Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning et al., 2015).

Even in these acute cases of ongoing life-threatening violence (PLIVO), officers' duty to act is not absolute. Where the limit lies, is often set down with reference to a legal standard determining that what is expected is a 'justifiable' effort (Directorate for Civil Protection and Emergency Planning et al., 2015, p. 16). In relation to the question of whether being generally armed affected officers' view of the duty to act, it is worthwhile looking

more closely at what is included in the assessment, and, in continuation of this, whether the officers' assessments were affected by being armed in daily service.

The first question related to the assessment is whether one can demand participation from all emergency personnel. In other words: is exposing oneself to greater risk in a 'PLIVO situation' within what ordinary operational personnel with approval in Category 4 (see below) must accept? This question has to be answered quite clearly in the affirmative. Plans have been drawn up within the police service for so-called 'immediate action' in respect of ongoing life-threatening violent acts. Everyone who graduates from PHS has received training in this, and these plans are reiterated at regular intervals in the ongoing training all operational crews undergo annually. All crews also have weapons training and have access to and are given training in the use of protective equipment. Against this background, it is impossible to argue that such service assignments generally go beyond what ordinary operational crew must expect to find themselves involved in.

Even though all officers approved for operational duties have had training in this 'immediate action' and are obliged to go into action, the skill level and experience of the available officers varies considerably. Response personnel are largely divided into four categories, of which those in Category 1 are best suited and trained to undertake armed assignments. Category I contains the Police Tactical Unit, Category 3 are the officers in the Police emergency response Units (UEH) who have significantly more comprehensive training in such situations than the ordinary operative force making up Category 4. In addition to differences in training and education between these categories, the most suitable crews are used in acute assignments when time permits. This means that in and around Oslo it will, to a large extent, be officers from the Police Tactical Unit who attend such assignments, while around the country it is usually forces from the police district's response units. This means that police officers in Categories 1 and 3, in addition to more - in some cases significantly more - comprehensive training and learning, also gain much more valuable experience and joint training than do the ordinary operational

force in Category 4. This is obviously disadvantageous in situations where the police's duty to act requires immediate action and yet the more experienced officers, due to time, distance, leave entitlement, and so on, are unavailable. It goes without saying that with a view to defensibility, an action can be planned differently when a well-trained, experienced, and possibly also better equipped team from the police district emergency response unit with IP3 certification is available, than when it has to make use of 'random' officers with varying levels of experience and limited joint training. Other than in Oslo and the other larger cities, there are grounds to believe that, when immediate action is required, it is more likely to be the latter than the former.

Even with well-trained crews, however, the prerequisites for being able to make a sound plan for action in situations calling for immediate action are generally poor: there will be time pressure, a lack of clear and unambiguous information, and the situation being planned for will not normally be stable, but constantly changing. Regarding how much time can be spent on planning, guidelines for this are given on page 47 of the *Police Emergency Preparedness System II* (PBS II).¹³ In situations of this type, the police must 'prepare themselves as quickly as possible to go directly into the action phase.' Often, the information the first unit at the crime scene has access to will be incomplete and, to some extent, contradictory. Witnesses who either have been or remain exposed to the threat are likely to be in a mental state not conducive to observation. In the limited time available, and without the possibility of obtaining verified information, the police's efforts therefore have to be planned on the basis of many uncertainties. Often, how a situation is at the time of planning for an intervention, will already have changed when that intervention is to be made – because, for instance, an armed perpetrator has moved on without firing a shot. This, in turn, means that considerable discretion must be allowed in how the police's efforts are carried out and the eventualities needing to be taken into account in situations requiring immediate action.

Although the actions of the police have to be planned in the face of a string of uncertainties, there is one dominant consideration which must

13 Not in the public realm

be emphasised both with regard to those who are to be rescued, and to the safety of the attending officers: based on the available plans and information and the quality and scope of the available resources, the effort *must be planned within such margins that it has a reasonable prospect of succeeding*. Legally speaking, it cannot be considered justifiable to base an intervention on a plan that presupposes to any significant extent that the police will have luck on their side, and that every uncertain factor must fall to the advantage of the task force in order that it succeed. Conversely, the intervention cannot be *not* made because of the possibility that officers might not emerge from it with life or health intact.

Evidence

One of the questions to the response personnel in the interview guide was designed with a view to clarifying if the officers being armed in the course of their ordinary duties had affected how they assessed their duty to act during the period of temporary arming – that is to say, if the circumstances under which they considered it justifiable to engage in ‘PLIVO situations’ had changed. Although the question was aimed principally at the ordinary operative officers, it was also, to a certain extent, put to control room supervisors and incident commanders. A selection of their answers is given below.

A control room supervisor told us that he did not believe that being armed had held any significance with regard to the duty to act, because in every situation in which the police encountered armed people they would, anyway, always have been armed. However, he believed that being armed made the officers feel:

(...) safer in that they've the weapon with them in those situations where they think something might be going to happen, but don't have such strong indications that they want to ask to be armed - or are able to get weapons for that matter.

The incident commanders said the same. They also did not think that the temporary, general arming of the police had altered the way the duty to act was seen such that officers' felt that they must take action even where

there was no reasonable chance of it succeeding; they thought that being armed probably made officers feel more confident in the face of the threat that justified their being armed (the terror threat).

Among the operational officers there appeared to be a difference in their answers based on whether they were thinking about their everyday duties, or about their duty to act in the extreme situations that might arise, but which they had not experienced.

I: Thinking about the extent to which there was sometimes a need to wait for patrol number two, was it affected by whether you were armed or not?

IP: No, basically I think not. There's so little difference, such a short distance between [place] and [place], that if there's been an incident where we must call for help, that help would come very quickly. So, when I sit and think about it now, I don't think there was any occasion when it had an effect.

I: No, and that's the kind of thing we're looking for...

IP: No, well then, I kind of try to think like crazy, but, you know, I don't come across situations where I think it was relevant.

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I: Have you any thoughts about the duty to act - if it was affected? That you thought you must do something right now because you were armed?

IP: I think that it's not that you lose your head and lose sight of the training we get at school, and through IP-training and UEH-training and all that, that doesn't all disappear just because you have a gun on your hip, you don't turn into Rambo and rush in and: now we'll save the world. So, I think that you've to trust that the training we've received is solid. We're, as far as I know, some of police with the

longest training in the whole world. There aren't many places where you get a three years' police training.

I: Well, apropos that, when you're standing there with your back to the wall and there you are, and everyone else is running away. Do you think that being armed had anything to say about you and your thinking around the duty to act?

IP: Yes, absolutely. That's how it is with ongoing shooting, when something begins, you're to go in. It's for this reason that it feels completely unnatural to begin to run in another direction, and to turn your back on someone and... And I think that most police, are a bit like that and go running in. I couldn't turn away and hide. If you've a weapon then you'd do all you could to prevent it.

I: But will, for example, being armed, and the period when you were, the duty to act, will it be a bit further forward in your forehead? So, now you have no reason to ring in? I already have my weapon...

IP: Yes, I'd never have rung. I don't know if I'd have bothered to call even if there was shooting going on.

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I: No, no, but I'm thinking about what you said about concerts for example, you talked about possible situations, which you have quite clearly outlined, at a shopping centre. Does it mean that you would go in in a different way?

IP: If I'd a weapon, right?

I: Yes, the duty to act which, where it is kind of the duty to act that pushes you into a situation. What do you think about that?

IP: I do think you might throw yourself around a bit more and get involved, maybe you don't have time to think so much. When you're going to run back, you get a bit hesitant - where're we going now? And then you've to sort of reset yourself because you're going back into the situation, but if you're already there and you see where

things are coming from, yes... It's so hard to know when you've never been in a situation like that; I'd have done such and such, and such and such, whether I'd a weapon or not. I don't know of course what I'd have done if it'd happened, but I think I'd have gone straight in.

With regard to the duty to act, it was not possible in the interviews to find any fundamental difference in the answers given by ordinary operational officers and those given by officers with primarily preventive duties.

I: Yes, we've asked a bit about the duty to act which was very much in focus after 22nd July and so on, do you feel that it's a bit more on your mind when you're carrying a weapon, or do you have thoughts about that?

F: I feel it quite strongly as far as I'm concerned – I'm more afraid of not doing my job than I am of being injured while on duty. We'll always win the battle no matter what it is, in my world at least, and we're willing to accept a lot of risk for the sake of others, not least colleagues, so I go ahead of the others, to put it like that, if I'm to choose who goes up in smoke. I didn't really feel it was anything different, I felt that whether we go with the weapon or without: we won't withdraw, we'll win anyway.

I: This has been clear the whole time, or clear to you at least?

I: Yes, in my case that was the case long before ever I joined the police, otherwise I'd have found myself another job, so in my case it's just plain simple maths.

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I: The duty to act (...) you feel that you must act, and you want to act more quickly, but are you sure you'll act better?

F: I think, I'd probably in many ways act the same, I'd just have had access to the tool a bit sooner. And again, then, it's about mental preparation and us training well in advance of that day should it

occur, instead of me having to run and turn around and arrange to have weapons and loading them and such, instead I'm immediately ready for action, but still, we need to keep our heads and we need to get it into our exercises, whether we're in IP training or with the division and that sort of thing. So, I feel that, I believe, I'd have acted just as well, but more quickly maybe.

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I: Just as well, but faster?

F: Yes, if that's the tool I need to resolve the incident, then I'll have access to it faster, and then I'll make sure I'm well enough prepared to make the same good judgements as if we'd had to run back to fetch the weapon, because I don't think that the focus would necessarily have been on good assessments when I'm running back to the car and the public are running and whatever the setting may be, so it's not a given that it'd make me think more about it, or find, the best solutions.

3.4. Tactical resolution of assignments

The evaluation was asked to look at what significance the temporary arming of the police had for *the police's tactical resolution of assignments, including planning, management, disposition of resources, expertise and use of protective equipment*. Concerning planning, the answers given below largely overlap with those given to the questions about whether communication of risk and risk assessment changed during the period of being armed.

I: If we look at questions about such planning and management, then, firstly, it's a question of whether you think it affected, shall we say, being armed, how potentially armed assignments were planned and led during the period?

OL: No, I felt that we did things in exactly the same way, if we're talking about when we'll go out to someone seen carrying a weapon or someone dashing around with a knife, so it was exactly the same as we do it today in a way, or did before, but these things that 'popped up' that we didn't have the measure of, in a way when, no... You still have to ask the same today; did you deal with it yourselves or did you use weapons? In a way, in an incident, to put it like that.

I: So, things that suddenly popped up – so now I'm just checking if I've understood you right – when you weren't armed, so it might be that they had to back off a bit and ask for permission to be armed, whilst here the same unexpected things could lead to them dealing with it on their own initiative, if I can put it that way?

boxOL: Yes, that's it, no – let's say that they drove out to [place] one evening and they saw someone known to the police and known to carry a knife or something like that, and they should make a stop or something like that, so we're not always told about it before the car stopped or things like that in a way, while they might, now they'd have said they were following and ask for weapons, right.

Perhaps more surprising was that the temporary period of being armed led, to a certain extent, to an increased use of personnel resources in the operations. OL believed that it could be unsafe to send a patrol of inexperienced officers into incidents armed because decisions would then have to be made by inexperienced officers.

I: So, it wasn't then, as many thought, that you, whereas before you might've sent two cars and three officers in each car to resolve the incident, that now you thought that; no, two men are fine on a Saturday night since they are armed.

OL: No, quite the opposite. I think it was, rather, that it was difficult to send a single patrol with relatively inexperienced people into an incident such as, for instance, an unpredictable domestic quarrel, and we had, for a time we had – parts of the summer and so on

– where we had quite little staff – and then there were those who felt unsafe going into a house and into situations with only two officers.

This view was shared by one of the response team leaders where planning and management were concerned:

I. When you, as incident commander, were leading your boys and it boiled over quite badly, and maybe – what do I know – also girls as well; your officers then. Did you do things differently, or think about things differently on account of the general arming of the police?

IL: Yes, you did. Were maybe a bit more aware that we, as far as we were able, backed each other up during incidents, you can say. Often before, maybe, we could travel to a place in just one car, but now if we at least knew in advance that; here is a large gathering of people, so we probably became a bit more aware and drove two cars and things like that.

I: Because you were armed?

IL: Yes.

I: No not the opposite then: you'll cope with that fine by yourselves, because now you have the 'bringer of peace' with you, so now...

IL: No, in any case not me personally, I think there was safety in there being just a few more of us.

I: Because you were armed?

IL: Mmm

Nor could the emergency response officers tell us about, or give specific examples of, the operational service being changed because of being armed. The following quote is an illustration of this:

I: So now we have a bit about planning and management, there's quite a lot we think about – first, there were maybe, at that time, some cases where you asked for permission

to be armed and would use it. Do you have the impression that potentially acute incidents, that they were planned and managed differently on account of you being already armed?

IP: No, I don't think so. I've thought about it in retrospect, and I don't think there was any great difference. The difference was that you didn't have to unlock the gun safe and take them out, otherwise the management was the same.

And when it came to this subject, the informants were positive about not having to request permission to be armed, and to spend time on the preparations that come with an arming order. That they were 'ready' from the first meant that they could focus more on the assignment itself, which was clear from their answers:

I: You had the weapons on your hip of course and in that way had no need to go and get them and get them ready, to put it like that. Did you feel that it gave you, that it was a bit liberating not to have to go through that? Did you use the time for something positive, talked to your patrol partner about resolving the incident and suchlike?

IP: Yes, you had, you escaped having to do these things and had the possibility of having more conversation with your partner about how to deal with the situation; what can we expect here? So, it's clear that it freed up a little capacity, it did.

In situations which might escalate and where orders to be armed are given, the time factor is important in several ways. Whilst it can be important and time-critical in relation to intervening, having to describe a situation as the justification for being granted arms gives the time needed to see the situation more from the outside, and this can be de-escalating. Our informants saw being routinely armed as positive from a time perspective:

I: If you now find yourself in a situation where you feel the need to be armed, you need to give a pretty good account of the situation. You have, therefore, to reflect on what you say and

do (...), that is, in a way, you have to persuade him on the other end of the 'phone or describe it so well that he (OL) agrees with you. Is there anything, when you lose that do you maybe go straight into the incident, faster than when you take the three minutes to describe it: there is someone who, and so on, and so on....?

IP: No, I really think that, of course in those situations where it's time-critical, where it's... where we find ourselves in exceptional circumstances, where we go in life and limb and where there are evidential considerations or thoughts, then you go right in, then it'll be like that, but I think in those cases where we have time, so... now I'm no team leader, but you talk with team leaders and I know as well that the incident commander reports to the control room supervisor as soon as he has a certain grasp over what's happening at the scene. So, I don't think that that disappears, I don't think so.

I: It didn't vanish when you were armed either?

IP: Not because we were armed, no. There are, of course, some incidents where you think that: OK, we could've solved this differently, but that happens both with and without weapons.

I: When you talked with your partner and reviewed things afterwards, have you a good level of communication around this? I mean, does being armed affect the way you talk to each other, the way you plan things?

IP: No, that's not the impression I'm left with now in any case, that there was any great difference. It was still that you came to work and did the job, without it being all about the weapons the whole time.

In the same way that the meeting with the public was unchanged on account of being armed, IP saw no sign that being armed had altered either the need for planning or the way duties were planned. An example:

I: OK, that brings me to a question I should ask instead, but, about the temporary arming, did it affect the way assignments were planned?

IP: You didn't plan any differently, but as I said, maybe one had a bit more, little more self-certainty when you went into certain incidents where you maybe otherwise would have...

I: Gave you more room for discussion? Focus on other things?

IP: Yes, it did that really, and it gave a bit more room for alternative ways of solving the same incidents really, because before it was a bit like when you were not armed, I mean when the weapon was so far away that when you went into that house or building, you thought all the time that it's quite far to that weapon if one needs to get it, for example, fetching weapons, and – yes, what can you say? It takes away a certain amount of capacity to think about where you've to go, how I'll manage to save my partner from a situation like this, while, in a way, the assessments, in a way they became a bit - you assessed in a way – yes, we have the weapon – according to the 'worst case theory'. If the person refuses to give up their weapon, or shoots at us instead of giving it over to us, I can at least respond then and there. So, it did make a certain difference in the same situation in that you got a little room to manoeuvre, to actually go in there without having to, yes because we would've gone in there anyway, had we not been armed in some situations anyway, so we got maybe more (...) [freedom?] as you say. Vague answer, but it's difficult to remember.

3.4.1. Use of resources

A natural follow-up topic concerned the extent to which the disposition of resources was affected by the temporary arming of the police. Were there, under the temporary arming, for instance, fewer resources used in the sense of manpower - fewer patrols and so on – because being armed gave the responding personnel extra safety and increased capacity in being already armed in situations that might escalate: An OL had the following to say about this:

I: Are you worried that it'll become a trend? That we are now sending out smaller crews because they are armed?

OL: Yes, yes, I am yes. I can see the possibility that it could happen and especially when we send out patrols in the districts, that it's a long way get any back-up and yes....

I: If you, as control room supervisor, could command a 'twenty percent greater force' on a Saturday night, would the need for armament be as great?

OL: No, I don't think that. I don't think that it's the number of officers that decides if weapons will be needed or not (...). No, it's the situation itself that you're going into that decides if you need weapons, not the number of people. And if you've a man with a knife, so....

!: And then with use of resource and expertise, whether you used them here somehow differently or?

OL: No, we've such limited resources here that it's the resources you have to hand when something happens that are used whatever. It has to be something exceptional before we start to call in (IP3) and so on, it's a bit different here, we use what we have.

For some of the incident commanders, being armed was more prominent or more important in planning and committal of resources than we found with the control room supervisors. An example from the interviews:

I: Did you plan differently? Did you use resources ... deploy people in a different way? Did you ring other patrols that you knew to be better trained; there can be.... And so on?

IL: Yes, I certainly did, yes. (...) I think I did that right from the first in the job, not necessarily when I got the assignment, but I was aware of it when I set up the patrols. Because I do that as an incident commander with my team, I see who's at work and then I see who's experienced (...)

Other emergency response leaders gave longer answers about planning, and, possibly, their answers covered much more than simply the question itself:

II: What should I say, I must think about it. No, I choose to believe that, in fact, we had the same focus because the task, where you – we’re, of course, used to requesting an order to be armed. When you categorise an assignment, you increase the focus on how, what’s needed for implementation – so yes, if we changed? I can see that this can be an important question for those of you who are sitting in the research group (...) I understand the question, that’s why I think it’s a bit difficult, because I’m unsure. It can certainly affect us at the lowest level of assignments, that might be. But, at the same time, I think that we at least, as it’s always been, we sort of flick a switch when we’re going to an incident where you expect to encounter an armed person, and that’s so ironed in. I’ll soon have been 30 years in the police and that switch gets to be so ironed in that it does something to you. I think that the advantage - but then we’re talking about being armed in general, aren’t we? Regardless of whether it’s temporary or permanent arming. That’s a decision made by those at the level where those decisions are made, and then there’re those in the situation. It’s the control room supervisor who’s to take the decision but he’s indoors, safe in his little bunker. He’s been given information which he’ll of course pass on to us out there, but it’s we who are out there who really know about things. What will make us safest? Should we be armed? Should we not be armed? As I said, when we had temporary, we were free of that uncertainty there - that we’ve to work and present ourselves either to a control room supervisor or, formerly, even a chief of police, who maybe hasn’t ever handled a weapon, who doesn’t know tactics, doesn’t know what it’s like to face such situations. How quickly things can get out of hand. So, in getting away from focusing on that, so you can focus on the important things, with the fact that you then have permanently armed crews and where you just have to trust that the crews out there are well enough trained and have good enough leadership because it is very important, I think.

Nor had officers experience of resources being deployed differently during the period when they were temporarily armed. They found the situation with resources to be largely the same, although to some extent

students ordinarily out in practice placements were kept somewhat in the background when assignments were at all unclear and the control room could not provide a good enough definition of the situation based on what the person reporting it had said:

IP1: No, then it had to be how it was with, for example, the students. That, if sometimes you'd break off.... In situations where you'd go back to the car to arm yourself, it was natural to leave the student there. But now, we just keep going even if there's a vague warning that maybe he has a knife or something... so then you'll maybe have the student with you a bit further into the incident than before, and, in that sense, an extra resource, that you maybe have an extra man in the car...

Beyond taking care of the students on placement, the emergency personnel had no experience of the resource situation being affected by the police being armed:

I: Did you have the same resources during the period of being temporarily armed, or did you have to go there alone because you were armed?

IP1: No, there were, you might say, plenty of people there.

I: There was no change in the way assignments were handled? Now they're armed, so now they can manage alone?

IP1: No, I don't think so.

IP2: No, I don't think so, not the assignments I've been on anyway, those have been completely the same. Same setup, same way of being kept informed and the same patrol and (...).

//

I: Say a little bit about being out on patrol, were there less, did you use fewer people? As if the incident commander said: you'll have to deal with this now that you have weapons with you.

IP: No

I: It didn't affect the use of resources somehow?

IP: No.

I: You're sure about that?

IP: That's my experience of it... (...) I don't have the numbers of course, but...

It should be mentioned that the informants were generally concerned about the level of resources, wanting more patrols is a given, but not particularly in relation to being armed.

3.4.2. Expertise

In considering what significance the period of being temporarily armed had for the police's tactical resolution of incidents, we asked whether the police had felt equipped for being armed in this way. The informants understood this question as applying to both being equipped in respect of training and guidelines, and of having adequate equipment. We let them answer both. Most gave the impression that they thought that the period of being armed had gone well, but that the weapon was unfamiliar at first, and this was something that appeared again when we asked if they had been adequately equipped:

I: So, we have a question? Were the police equipped to be temporarily armed? When the order came?

OL: Yes, they were. But it's clear that it was, I felt responsible, that here was a situation we hadn't found ourselves in before. And it was a bit, yes, that you felt that you had to keep an eye on things in the beginning.

Several did say that, at first, they felt unsure in carrying a weapon while on ordinary duties and lacked routines and guidelines as to how this was to be done. Many felt that that they hadn't had sufficient training and that therefore it 'wasn't in their bones', as one of the response team leaders put it:

I: Perhaps a little like that, just continue on here about knowledge and skills - do you mean that the crews that you led then, that they were equipped for a period of being temporarily armed? In terms of knowledge and skills?

IL: Yes, some of them, some of them, I think. Now we're not that many on a watch, around 10, so the age range can vary from – for my part I've been 30 years in the service while others come straight from school. And I think that perhaps, speaking purely from experience, there're some who're good at shooting, precision when not under pressure, but then having experienced situations and that when the stress begins, it probably varied a lot.

This informant stressed the difference between being trained to carry and use weapons in a stressful situation as opposed to simply being skilled in precision shooting. Several pointed to this when it came to training in general, and many missed there being more weapons training - both in the basic training and routinely during service. How secure you feel with the training you have had can, for most people, be expected to affect whether they feel equipped to be temporarily armed. One who felt that he was ready, put it like this:

I: When you all began with this, more on planning and management, did you feel the need for some repetition in relation to handgun courses or re-certification when being armed began?

UP: No, not that. Not at all. When you, when you first are granted approval for operational work and have access to the shooting range and have, it's an individual thing of course, but I didn't, in any case, feel that. Not at all. Of course, it has something to do with my having always been, with few exceptions, operative in the police and so have... And for my part I've also had some special training with weapons, the handgun course.... Been an instructor out in [place], operative disciplines and ... So, I didn't feel that.

Those who thought they had been prepared, pointed out that they were operationally approved anyway and therefore should have been prepared. Nevertheless, most said that they would have welcomed more training, that it would have made them feel safer and clearer at the beginning of the period when they were armed. Several pointed to their studies at PHS and their basic training as being an important point of departure. As one incident commander put it:

IL: I would certainly say that the Norwegian police are well prepared for bearing arms, we train a lot, we're very focused on that, we have restrictions, a limit to whether and when we are to be armed (...).

Much of the training, on the grounds of, among other things, the need to travel long distances to reach a shooting range, had, for a couple of the police, to take place on their own initiative. All the same, several said that temporary period of being armed led them to take a trip to the shooting range with their weapons more often than before. An example:

IP: (...) But I think, you never get enough training. I think we could've trained even more on shooting and that it's not up to us to find the time. I've spent a lot of my free time on the shooting range just to be on the safe side.

More training and a clearer framework for the period of being armed were things most people expressed a wish for. Several pointed out that the period of being temporarily armed arrived abruptly, leading to uncertainty, variation, and local solutions in the beginning. The following quote illustrates this:

I: OK, this is a bit about knowledge and skills. Do you think the police were prepared for the temporary arming when it came?

F: I'm a bit unsure about that, I think so, but it came at us rather quickly without the routines being in place so, to that extent, we weren't, but I do think the armed officers were well prepared for it.

It seemed to many that the lack of routines reinforced their uncertainty about the period and the sense of being prepared.

Several of the informants put forward accidental weapons discharges as evidence that not everyone was well enough prepared to be armed all the time. Others argued that accidental discharges happen anyway, and that the media had maybe had an unreasonable level of focus on this at that time. It was said that most people were both ready and able, even if the accidental discharges indicated that not all were.

Many emphasised that the period of being armed had gone well and that they therefore felt more ready to be armed now than they had before the period started. As our questions were posed after completion of the period, we might suppose that the informants' answers were coloured by it having been 'a success' for most people: the answers may have been different had they been posed before the period began. One of the response team leaders said that:

I: But were the police geared up for it? Do you think the Norwegian police were ready, and are we ready now?

IL: We're more ready now than we were.

I: Because you've been through that period?

IL: Yes, exactly that. Significantly more ready than we were. I don't think we were as ready as we should've been. Among other things, I think that training and routines weren't good enough. Emptying the weapon, awareness around that, because what we do at the shooting range as an exercise during certification, emptying the weapon, that's the only time you need to do that. Doing it every day and at the end of every watch, that's something else altogether.

Several of the informants also had a view about their purely technical equipment when we asked whether they had been equipped for the period when they were armed. It seems that there is a widespread perception that the equipment was not good enough: not well adapted to each individual

and appearing 'shabby'. This did not seem to be a big problem in an overall sense but did make things somewhat clumsier and time consuming for the individual.

When asked if the police were equipped for the period of being temporarily armed, the informants therefore pointed to both a lack of training and poorly adapted equipment. The wish for more training was repeated in the great majority of the interviews, regardless of whether they otherwise thought they were ready or not. This does not have to be interpreted as the informants not knowing what they should; rather as meaning that they would appreciate ongoing training, and that they generally think that it is not possible to train sufficiently when using firearms.

3.4.3. Use of protective equipment

Examining the extent to which the period of temporary arming affected the use of protective equipment was an element within the mandate. Usually, granting an order to be armed leads to the crews taking up their weapons, putting on 'heavy vests' and so on. During the period of being routinely armed, they wore 'regular' security equipment such as the light vest. The question was whether the crews, as the procedure was no longer the same, still spent time finding and putting on the right safety equipment before going into incidents.

I: Protective equipment then, did you use it in a different way?

IP1 & IP2: No, don't think so (...)

IP1: But those times when we got a message that was something or another, we put on the protective kit just as we would have done then as well, but it's exactly those messages, when you're already armed and you just carry on in, whilst if you'd had to stop and go back to the car, so maybe you'd have taken the opportunity to put on your helmet and heavy vest.

Here again, the unexpected, the things that ‘pop up’ and cannot be planned for, appear to explain a lack of use of safety equipment. Running back to the car was again seen as leaving less opportunity to solve the task quickly. Initially, the crews thought they were using the protective equipment in the same way, but then there was the question of running back:

I: Do you think that in dropping step one which is taking up the weapon, you still don't want to drop steps two and three - taking out the heavy vest and helmet?

OL: No, that's clear enough.... But it's also a question of what kind of assignment it is. If it's something acute, or something where you know you'll have time – that is, if you're prepared, then you'll have time to act and to put stuff on, but if there's suddenly someone with a knife or whatever, so maybe you don't manage to put on anything beyond the light vest you're already wearing.

I: Did the period of being armed affect the use of such protective equipment then? Such as the heavy vest, helmet, shield? During the temporary arming?

IL: Nah, no. I'll have to think a bit. No, not really, but I can see that it can happen because if you're already armed then you don't get, you think that, yes, OK, this is just an ordinary task, so we'll do it with just what we're wearing and not put on the heavy protective gear, but then it's often been the case that we don't put on the heavy protective equipment when we're unarmed as well. It depends on where, yes where, the duty to act comes into play and where, what we'll do and what we're facing, and also [aiming to] do - yes, if we're in with a family for instance, or whatever. I can see that this can have an effect and that, if you look at it in the right way it can look negative by saying that it's better to have that stop, but I would prefer that we don't have the stop, that we just make the assessment and keep at least in mind that, okay, maybe we need to take on a little more now, the same as when we ask to be armed with MP5 and such, we

think then that it's perhaps more of a weapon that with a greater range and such and then you often use a little heavier protective equipment.

3.5. Serious incidents related to handling of weapons

3.5.1. Serious incidents related to handling of weapons

A central question for the evaluation related to the extent to which the temporary arming of the police resulted in an increase in the number of serious incidents connected to weapons handling. Specifically, in the mandate, it said: *What was the extent of serious incidents related to weapons handling (such as accidental discharges, attempts to deprive officers of loaded weapons and any other risk situations) during the period of being temporary armed?* In the media, during this period, several instances were reported where accidental shots were fired, or attempts made to take an officer's weapon. Statistical probability theory and situational prevention theory (Felson & Clarke, 1998) as well as previous research (Strype & Knutsson, 2002) suggest that more weapon handling leads to more unwanted incidents such as these.

To shed more light on this question we have made use of the monthly reporting by the police districts to POD regarding incidents associated with the use of weapons. From the start of the period of being temporarily, generally armed, the police districts were required to report these incidents generically, without the type of incident being clearly specified. From and including September 2015, the police districts were asked to report on specified areas, including:

- Number of unintentional shots outside the de-cocking box, on police premises or in the public space.
- Number of unintended shots fired at the shooting range or during other exercises.
- Number of instances of attempts to deprive police of their weapon.

In what follows, we will concentrate mainly on the period from and including September 2015 to and including July 2016 (hereafter referred to as ‘the investigation period’). This makes it possible to compare the extent of undesirable incidents during and after the temporary period of being armed, as the reporting continued after the phasing out of this period in mid-February 2016.

3.5.2. Accidental discharge of shots

We begin by looking at the total of (reported) accidental discharges between September 2015 and July 2016. The frequency of these reports of accidental discharges, by month, is shown in Figure 1 below.

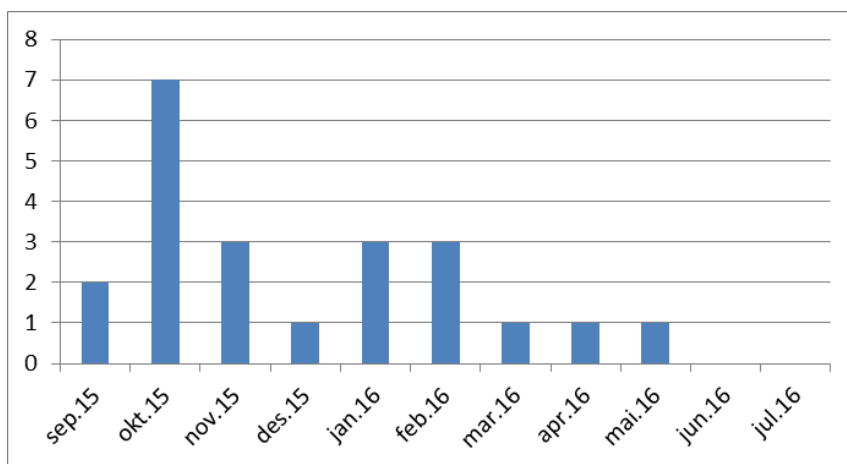


Figure 1. Reported accidental discharge of weapons in the police between September 2015 and July 2016

In this 11-month period, a total of 22 accidental weapon discharges in the police were reported, that is, two per month on average. They are, however, not equally distributed between the months or between the period of and the period following the temporary, general arming of the force. If we disregard February 2016, where there was temporary arming

only at the very beginning of the month,¹⁴ we have five months of the temporary, general arming (September 2015 to January 2016) and five months of normal arming practice (March 2016 to July 2016). Comparing these two periods, we see that in the five months when the police were temporarily armed 16 accidental discharges were reported, while in the five months following the end of the temporary arming there were ‘only’ three reports. The temporary, general arming of the police appears to have led to an increase in the number of such accidental weapons discharges. When we consider that thousands of police officers were armed daily with loaded weapons, it is not unexpected that there should be a certain increase. It is not possible to eradicate human or technical errors completely, and the more frequently people are armed (with loaded weapons) the greater the likelihood that accidental discharges will occur.

A pertinent question with respect to this was what characterised these incidents of accidental discharge. Under what circumstances did they arise? If we take the abovementioned categories as our starting point, we get the following distribution for the periods during and after the temporary arming of the police:

Table 1. Under which circumstances did accidental discharges occur during and after the period of temporary, general arming of the police?

	During temporary arming	After temporary arming
Unintentional firings outside the de-cocking box, in the police premises or in the public space.	10	2
Unintentional firing on the shooting range or other exercise.	6	1
Total	16	3

¹⁴ According to a press release from The Directorate of Police on 28th January 2016, the temporary, general arming of the police would end by 3rd February 2016 at the latest. If the change happened on that date, there was a single accidental discharge, in the month of February, within the period of temporary arming, and two outside of it.

Most accidental discharges registered here, occurred outside the de-cocking box,¹⁵ on police premises or in the public space. If one looks more closely at what characterises the accidental discharges in this category, one finds that in 10 cases they took place on police premises, and in two cases in a police vehicle. Therefore, no accidental shots were reported outside police premises or vehicles. They seem, therefore, to have represented primarily a threat to the police themselves.

If one looks at the accidental weapons discharges occurring on police premises (excluding the shooting range), then it concerned maintenance in weapons/cleaning rooms, self-practice in taking the gun in and out of the holster, and testing of the holster itself (that is, the possibility of someone removing the weapon once the holster safety hood is on). In a more curious episode, a policeperson had had a coughing fit whilst on the way down to the de-cocking sand box and this had led to a shot being accidentally fired. In the case of the two accidental discharges inside police vehicles, both related to emptying the weapon.

Where the seven accidental shots categorised as ‘shooting range or other exercises’ were concerned, most were said to have involved de-cocking exercises in which the wrong procedure was followed when emptying an MP5 or a handgun. In all, five instances fitted this description while the other two instances involved exercises in drawing the weapon and an unsecured weapon that went off during an exercise.

Accidental discharges constitute a significant danger to life and health. In our material, it was principally shots accidentally discharged outside the shooting range which represented a potential danger. While the accidentally discharged shots on the shooting range were, in most cases, fired in a safe direction as part of the procedure for de-cocking, in the other cases the direction in which it was fired was more random, leading to a greater probability of injury. This is reflected in the reported injuries, although these are too few to be able to draw any definite conclusions. Four cases of injury were reported during the period we investigated,

15 De-cocking boxes are filled with sand and de-cocking a weapon should take place whilst it is pointing into that.

three of them outside the shooting range. Both instances involving testing of the functionality of the holster led to injury; in one case leading to relatively superficial flesh wounds from a ricochet/fragment, and the other involved a shot in the leg. The third case of injury involved emptying a weapon in a police vehicle and in this case resulted in the projectile passing through the ankle /instep resulting in a long period of recovery. The fourth and last recorded injury involved an exercise using live ammunition on the shooting range. In changing from an MP5 to a handgun, the MP5 was to be hung on the officer's back. In this movement, a shot was fired, hitting the concrete floor, with the ricochet hitting another officer who received a superficial leg injury.

3.5.3. Weapon taken from the officer, or attempts to do so

Having a weapon taken represents, as with accidental discharges, a potential danger to life and health. During police testing of the functionality of holsters, it was found that 'fiddling' with the gun without being able to pull it out of the holster, could be enough to trigger shots if there are technical defects in the holster. As with the accidental discharge of weapons, attempts to take a weapon from a police officer received considerable attention in the media. As a result, this kind of incident was reported to POD from September 2015 to and including July 2016. A review shows that no incidents in which the police were deprived of weapons were reported during this period, but several attempts to take weapons were reported. The distribution of these is given in Figure 2.

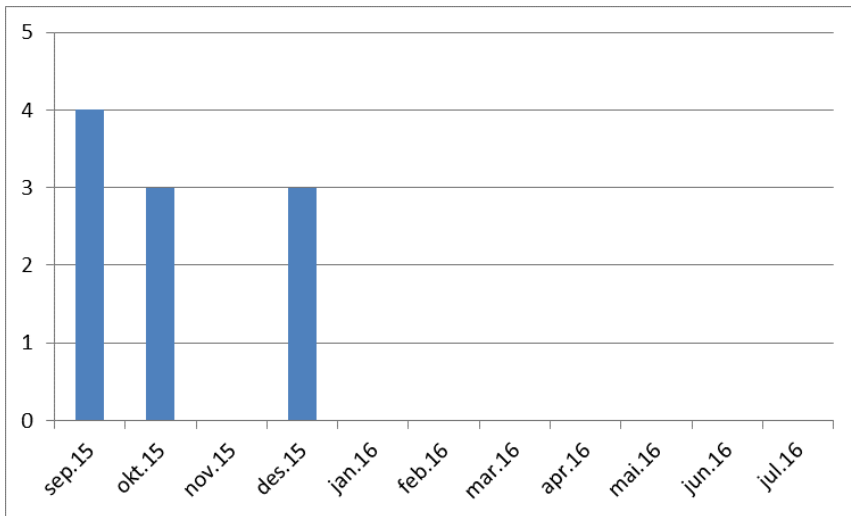


Figure 2. Reports of attempts to deprive police of their weapon.

There was a total of 10 reported events in the period we have looked at, all of them during the period of temporary, general arming of the police. Several of the incidents were associated with arrests in public areas, and in some cases in connection with transporting mentally ill patients. In most cases the situation required no greater use of force than bringing the person to the ground and making the arrest. In one case, pepper spray was used to gain control over the person.

3.6. The police districts' and specialist agencies' assessment of being armed after circa three months of the temporary, general arming of the police.¹⁶

In this evaluation, interviews were conducted with 30 people divided between control room supervisors, incident commanders and ordinary operational officers drawn from selected police districts and specialist agencies, about nine months after the 14-month period during which the police were temporarily, routinely armed had come to an end. As

¹⁶ See the discussion in Point 5.3

mentioned in the Introduction (1.2), elements of the areas covered by the evaluation mandate were also the subject of questions from POD to the police districts and specialist agencies while the period of being armed was in progress, especially relatively early in this period.

While our interviews elicit the perceptions, impressions and experiences at ground level of the Norwegian police nine months after the relatively long period of being armed ended, the document analysis of the responses from the police districts and specialist agencies give an impression of how management in the police (preferably the chief of police chief or head of joint operations) viewed the temporary general arming of their officers during the first two to three months after its introduction. In general terms, there is reason to believe that the answers given to POD early in the period of being armed can be characterised by concern about ‘what being armed will lead to’, whereas the answers in our interviews can be characterised more by satisfaction that ‘it went well’. To the extent that the same issues are reflected in both the reports to the Norwegian Police Directorate and our interviews, it is interesting to see if there are any differences between them.

The questions below are, with certain changes to the language used, taken from POD’s letter of 25th February 2015 to 27 chiefs of police and the heads of four specialist agencies. Based on the documentation sent from POD, 19 police districts and two specialist agencies responded to the inquiry.¹⁷ Most of the questions in the letter of 25th February were – albeit using different wording - those asked in earlier inquiries from POD. This applied, among others, to POD’s letter of 27th January 2015 to the police districts and specialist agencies. There are responses to this letter from four police districts and one specialist agency which do not seem to have responded to the February enquiry. The figures in red below are taken from the replies to the letter from January 2015.

POD’s letter of 27th January 2015 only requested information about possible negative experiences or effects arising from being routinely

17 ¹⁷KRIPOS [the Norwegian National Criminal Investigation Service], during this period, was not affected by the temporary arming of the police service and is therefore excluded from the statistics here.

armed. In Question 3 below, it is therefore methodologically extremely dubious that someone has used the answers to this inquiry to add five 'no' answers to the question about whether one had experienced 'threat situations that would not have been resolved as positively without the general arming of the force.' However, given the attention in recent years to the question of arming the police, we have assumed that the police districts would have mentioned it if they had had experience showing that being armed, on the contrary, affected the resolution of incidents in the opposite direction to that indicated by the POD question.

In total, as we said, POD's questions were directed at 27 police districts and four specialist agencies. With the combination of responses given here, 23 of 27 police districts, and three¹⁸ of four specialist agencies have responded to one or both inquiries from POD.

The answers to Question 1: *'Does being armed affect the ordinary police service, including situations requiring the use of force, but not weapon-firing force?'* are divided into three categories. The distribution of the answers between the first and second of these was largely determined by the extent of the police districts' answers. Some elected to answer with 'yes/no', whilst others responded along the lines that being armed essentially did not affect performance of the service, but that it did call for taking care of the weapon. Probably, those who answered just 'no', would have made the same clarification if follow-up questions had been asked. Even in the first fifth of the period of being armed, police management's feedback was that being temporarily generally armed had little effect on the conduct of the ordinary police service. The district which reported that being armed affected their ordinary service, said that they carried out fewer preventative patrols in densely packed premises (nightclubs, etc.), and these appear in the table under the heading 'refrain from certain tasks'.

18 PHS has been removed from the table. Therefore, N=26.

Question 1	No	Aware of the weapon, greater alertness, more hesitant during physical intervention	Refrain from certain tasks
Does being armed affect ordinary police duties, including situations requiring the use of force, but not (weapon-firing) force?	7 + 3	12 + 1	1 + 1

Even in the initial phase of the period of being armed, when it must be assumed that officers were most unfamiliar and uncomfortable with being armed, there was relative unison in the feedback to Question 2: *‘Have there been situations where being armed has led to a negative outcome of an assignment?’* Fully 24 of 25 police districts and specialist agencies had no experience of this kind (at least not that the leadership were aware of). The only incident of this kind reported involved an officer breaking a finger in averting the attempt of a person being arrested to take the officer’s weapon.

Question 2	No	Yes (if so what?)
Have there been situations where being armed has led to a negative outcome in an assignment?	19 + 5	1

Concerning Question 3: *‘Have threatening situations arisen that would not have been resolved as positively without general arming of the police?’* - there were, early in the period of temporary, general arming of the force, two police districts that described cases that must be considered as representing an affirmative answer. Both related to threats with a knife.

The first of these took place at night in a public place, in a square with many people present. One person was attacked by the man carrying the knife, and several others were threatened. The police received many calls about someone running amok. A police patrol happened to be only some hundreds of metres away and could go directly to the scene, without using

time to arm themselves. The perpetrator then immediately stopped and attempted to run away but was caught and apprehended.

The other case involved a situation where it was, according to the police district, uncertain whether, or not, an arming order would have been issued outside the temporary general arming period. An intoxicated and unstable person, visiting an acquaintance, called the police and told them he was going to injure himself using a knife. A patrol went there and found the man sitting unharmed on the sofa, but with a large kitchen knife in his hand. He wasn't compliant and got up after a while and came towards the police with the knife pointing at them. The officers drew their weapons and ordered him to put the knife down. He did and the police gained control of the situation. Without being armed, the police would have had to have pulled back. There was nothing to suggest that the suspect's acquaintances or the owner of the flat had been threatened.

Question 3	No	Yes (how?)
Have there been threatening situations that would not have been resolved as positively without general arming of the police?	18 + 5	2

Where Question 4: *Does being generally armed reveal training and learning needs?* - is concerned, there were differences in the answers due, to an extent, to how comprehensively police districts and special agencies chose to respond to POD's request. Of the two out of five answering that being routinely armed called for further training, most referred to a need for renewed training in arrest techniques: officers should receive training in making arrests and using physical force whilst armed with a handgun. PHS developed such a programme which – at least towards the end of the period of being routinely armed – was to be implemented in the police districts (cf. footnote to Point 4.2.2).

Another point of view is that a generally armed police force ought to mean that category IP5 – comprising officers with so called adapted operative training and without certification for the use of weapons - be

disbanded. Districts with a number of officers in this category, and with limited staffing resources, found it difficult (and in part impossible) to maintain availability of armed patrols 24/7. A chief of police makes the point that a generally armed police should mean that, during training, emphasis is placed on avoiding a development where the use of firearms (including the threat of their use) occurs in situations where one would not previously have been armed.

Question 4	No	Yes (in that case what?)
Does being generally armed reveal training needs?	11 + 4	9 + 1

4. The mandate: what has been answered?

4.1. Introduction

According to the mandate, there were four main questions to be answered, and the report was to be delivered by 1st February 2017:

- What effect had being armed on the police's contact with the public? Including the way in which responding officers approached the public, how they behaved in large crowds, were there situations they avoided, the way in which being armed affected their feeling of safety (positively, negatively) when their stance with regard to being armed has been taken into account.
- What effect had the temporary, general arming of the police on officers' assessment and communication of risk (between the control room and responding officers and between the officers themselves, including the incident commander) and their perception of risk?
- What significance has being generally armed had for the police's tactical resolution of assignments, including planning, management, disposition of resources, competence and use of protective equipment?
- What was the extent of serious incidents related to weapons handling (such as accidental weapon discharge, attempts to deprive officers of their weapon and any other potential risk factors) in the period of temporary, general arming of the force? The circumstances in which these serious incidents occurred should also be investigated.

To be able to answer these questions, we chose for the evaluation, as described in Chapter 2, a largely qualitative approach. The first three bullet points of the mandate were operationalised, adapted, and used as part of an interview guide in qualitative interviews. The final bullet point has been answered, largely through document analysis of the correspondence between POD, the police districts and specialist agencies.

The selection of informants interviewed came from different districts¹⁹ and from the specialist agency, the National Mobile Police Service (UP). The selection comprised 30 persons, 21 men and nine women. Policemen and -women occupying the following roles were interviewed: seven control room supervisors (OL), six incident commanders (IL), 10 ordinary operational officers (IP) and seven crime prevention officers. In certain police districts, crime prevention officers conduct that role as ordinary operational personnel but with a special responsibility for the crime prevention strategy of the service. The interviews took place in November and December 2016, and the length of service²⁰ of those interviewed ranged from 1988 and 2012.

In Chapter 4, we further present and summarise our findings in respect of the mandate itself and the questions it posed. Then, in Chapter 5, we discuss and expand on our findings in relation to the relevant research publications we made an introductory mention of earlier in the report (cf. Point 1.6).

In the interviews, we asked both open and closed questions. To begin (setting the scene) the interview we used most time on open questions dealing with general experiences arising from the period of temporary, general arming of the police. This set a standard for the rest of the interview and the interview situation that had been established.

Through these introductory questions, the informants quickly came to their own experiences and their own perceptions of the temporary general arming of the service - which was not always within the questions in the mandate, but which placed the evaluation within a police context.

If we look across the results from the interviews as a whole, there are few or no clear indications that any part of the police service was significantly changed by, or performed differently during, the time of being generally armed, attributable to the officers having been armed. The interview

19 Anonymous

20 Length of service is reckoned from the date of graduation from the Police School / the Police University College.

questions were adapted to the role of the interviewee. OL were asked about the extent to which (s)he had instructed or informed their crew regarding being cautious in their contact with the public, while IP officers were asked about the way they conducted themselves in their contact with the public in the period when they were routinely armed. None of the control room supervisors (OL) we interviewed held the view that any significantly different messages had been issued, nor that there were any changes to the directives given to the crews during this period. They insisted that, for their part, the communication and follow-up had been the same as before the period of being armed. Although the control room supervisors we interviewed were not themselves 'out on the streets' during this time, they were concerned about the importance of protecting 'one's own weapon' and made sure that this was repeatedly communicated to the crews, but without this, they argued, affecting the instructions they gave regarding which tasks were to be performed, or, in some cases, how. Of the IPs, not one in our sample thought that they had had approached the public differently during the time of being armed.

4.1.1. How response personnel behaved in large crowds.

Although no one in our sample thought that they had a different approach to the public during the time when they were routinely armed, some of them did say that, at first, they were very aware of protecting their weapon in the face of large crowds. They didn't think that this had amounted to a hindrance, but they had been very aware of the possibility of their weapon being taken from them. Where the weapon was experienced as a problem, was when it came to physical arrest or what in 'police language' is called [in Norwegian] 'basking' – a little 'rough stuff'. It was clear that, here, they thought of their weapon as a hindrance and something that could both practically and mentally get in the way of the successful completion of the task.²¹ None of them had any personal experience of this but said clearly that it could present a problem. It was clear that officers familiarised themselves with carrying weapons, and that it eventually became a

21 In autumn 2015, PHS developed a training programme for 'protecting one's own service weapon'. From 1st January 2016 this was included in the training at PHS (arrest techniques) and added to the topic list for both training and re-certification of operational crew (IP4).

'natural' part of their equipment. Some told us that they felt safer and better prepared in that they had the weapon with them and could therefore move further away from the vehicle in meeting with the public.

4.1.2. Were there situations the officers sought to avoid?

We received no affirmative answers as to whether there were situations that officers avoided or dealt with differently on account of being armed. What emerged, especially in areas outside the cities, were problems around the phenomenon of 'basking'. "Basking" is a police term for physically pacifying a person. This often has to do with arrest around drunkenness, disorderly conduct, house riots and so on, when it may be necessary to 'remove uncooperative people by force'. These are situations that officers encounter on a regular basis and that operational police must deal with. It is that part of 'meeting the public' that many thought might be more problematic with weapons - partly because the weapon is in the way, physically, of being able to perform the correct arrest technique, and partly because these are situations where it can be difficult to protect one's own weapon. Examples of such situations mentioned by the informants were the arrest and transport of mentally ill patients.

4.1.3. How did being armed affect officers' feeling of safety, when their stance regarding being armed has been controlled for?

In our evaluation work, it was difficult to identify the extent to which being armed affected our informants' sense of safety when their attitude to being armed was taken into account. This is a question best suited to a quantitative and statistical approach. In addition, as we have seen, there was little variation in informants' attitude toward permanent general arming of the police service. An exception here was officers from UP who saw clear practical disadvantages to being armed whilst driving a vehicle. In the interviews, we asked to what extent being armed affected their feeling of safety. These answers are impossible to check against what the informants thought about being generally armed *before* the period of general armament. Given our approach, we must accept the answers we received, and the possibility that they were characterised by both post-hoc

rationalisation and by the time elapsed since the period of temporary, general arming.

Most of our informants were quite clear that being armed had made them feel more secure. One of them expressed this as follows:

I've likely become more positive [about being armed] and confident, and that's mostly because I see that we can handle things without them getting worse. There is none of the escalation of situations and that kind of thing, like when I've had to run back to the car to pick up.

The feeling of safety for our informants was about mastering situations or, conversely, the fear of being left without an opportunity to master a situation because they lacked weapons. Very few of them had any experience before, during or after the period of being armed, where being armed affected the resolution of an incident.

The feeling of safety was also manifested by the period of being temporarily armed having, as the informants experienced it, not having changed their behaviour, nor given rise to weapons being used unnecessarily. This could, naturally, have influenced their attitude toward being armed in the direction of it not being necessary - daily service assignments are solved without weapons and should a situation require it, an order to be armed is made. Our informants, however, interpreted it as a clear indication that carrying weapons was unproblematic, not creating a lack of safety, or distance from the public – everything remained as it had been before the time of being armed. Why then should the police not be armed?

For most, carrying a weapon became, through familiarity, a habit, emotionally as well. The feeling of insecurity about being armed conveyed to us by the informants was not dependent on the extent to which they had encountered situations that could have led to the use of the weapon. The feeling of unsafety was, rather, about personal safety and the safety of one's work partner during cocking and de-cocking the weapon. None of

our informants had needed to use a weapon. To the extent that the period of the temporary, general arming of the police affected the sense of safety of our informants, it had led to a clearer wish for a permanently generally armed police service. That ‘everything had gone well’ and ‘nothing had happened’ led some people to change their mind and become supporters of being armed, while others had believed all along that a permanently armed police force was the way forward. Overall, there was satisfaction that ‘the police had managed this in a good way’.

4.2. Risk assessment and the duty to act

4.2.1. Generally, about the results

Of the points in the mandate, bullet point 2 about risk assessment is least well answered and clarified by the interviews in which the question about the possible impact of being armed on the communication of risk was consistently better answered than its significance for risk assessment and the perception of risk. The reason for this result has several facets:

The informants were not very familiar with the concept of risk. It seemed that many did not have a clear picture of what it involved. They focused primarily on the risks they themselves had experienced in being armed on duty. Accidental discharges and being unable to get the seat belt to fit correctly were quickly identified as risk factors (cf. Point 3.4.2.).²² A strongly contributing factor to this was that the interview guide we were using at this point was probably overly general. Our informants were officers primarily used to dealing with specific and situation-based issues. Answering this in an interview situation without being pre-prepared in relation to being able to differentiate between risk to oneself, risk to third parties, risk to the population in general and between risk assessment and risk perception would probably have challenged most people.

It is, of course, entirely our responsibility that the interview guide used was less than satisfactory on this point. With hindsight, it is easy to see

²² Sandham et al. (2016) had similar experiences relating to the concept of risk.

that had we had sufficient time available much would have been gained from a pilot prior to the interview guide being used: it would have quickly made clear that the questions about risk needed to be more concrete, discussion of case-based issues probably being preferable. In the event, this weakness came to light after the completion of the interviews in the first of the police districts. Given that interviews with the control room supervisors, incident commanders and ordinary operational personnel were to be conducted in only three police districts, it would have been methodologically unsatisfactory to change the interview guide significantly after a third of the interviews had been conducted.

Issues relating to the communication of risk, especially between the control room supervisor and the incident commander / operational officers, and between the incident commander and the operational officers, are probably the more relevant the larger the police district. Rogaland was the largest police district where we interviewed a full set of control room supervisors, incident commanders and ordinary operational officers. The Chief of Police there had given instructions that being armed should be understood as 'advanced [weapon] storage on the hip', and that specific permission to deploy weapons should still be obtained if there was time for that. Being routinely armed had therefore had apparently affected risk communication to only a very limited extent here, at least that between the crews on patrol and the control room.

4.2.2. Communication of risk

Behind the question of whether the temporary arming of the police affected the way risk was communicated (between the control room supervisor and the crews outside, and between the incident commander and the crews, possibly also between the operational officers themselves), there lay the assumption that being temporarily armed might have caused the loss of important elements of what is described as the 'phase model' in serious incidents, and that Norwegian police might move in the direction of a 'split second model' (Strype & Knutsson, 2002). Central to the Norwegian phase model is that unless there is a situation of acute danger, serious assignments necessitating being armed will often start with the

operational officers/incident commander justifying to the control room supervisor why being armed is necessary, while planning how the incident is to be resolved, including which steps lower on the power pyramid could and should be tried first. During the time when officers were armed, there was a concern that this kind of communication might be reduced. None of the interviews we conducted – neither with control room supervisors, incident commanders or with ordinary operational officers – lent support to this this fear. In the Troms and Vestoppland police districts, control room supervisors and incident commanders stressed that conditions there were such that they always had good contact with the patrol(s), and that no formal decision to arm having to be made for each assignment had no negative impact on communication. In Rogaland police district, where the distances involved were greater and the patrols more, (as mentioned above) the communication procedures in potentially serious situations remained the same as before the period began. It is possible that interviews with control room supervisors in Oslo, for example, or Hordaland, might have yielded different results.²³

The informants did not think that being armed had any negative impact on communication between the response officers. The overall impression was of the response personnel emphasising that the deeply held operational plans and routines were followed just as when they were not generally armed. That the pyramid of power and the requirement that minimum force be used, applied also during the armed period was emphasised by several people.

To the extent that the response force and incident commanders indicated any change in communication whilst temporarily armed, they were in a positive direction; they had better time to discuss, plan and mentally prepare for how assignments were to be resolved - this instead of having to spend time arguing the case for being armed and then, possibly, finding and preparing weapons, as they did at other times.

23 Sandham et al. (2016) found that risk communication was negatively affected where the 'Rogaland-solution' had not been adopted

4.2.3. Risk assessment and perception of risk

As mentioned above in Point 4.3.1, we did not for various reasons, through the interviews, receive very good answers as to whether the period of being routinely armed affected the officers' risk assessment and risk perception. Informants often associated 'risk' with their own safety and that of de-cocking weapons. Our informants from UP, on the other hand, linked the risk associated with being armed all the time to their not being able to fasten their seatbelt correctly. Risk was often associated with routine situations, even though several pointed out that being armed left them better prepared for 'the one time' and 'think if...'. It is striking that very few mentioned the risk of terrorist acts in connection with the period of being armed, even though this was why the decision was taken to introduce it.

The impression given by the interviews was that officers drew little distinction between risk assessment, risk perception, security/safety and duty to act. Their view can be represented as follows: the temporary, general arming of the police had not led them to plan or act differently than before in potentially serious situations, nor had it affected where the limit of their duty to act lay (more on this below). It had, on the other hand, led to greater security in terms of being able to carry out their duties and protect third parties, their partner and themselves in acute situations arising suddenly or unexpectedly.

4.2.4. Duty to act

On the basis both of the arguments most often evinced for a general arming of the police - the need to be able to immediately protect the public and oneself - and of the factors included in assessment (cf. Point 3.4.4.), it seemed clear that as the officers became accustomed to carrying weapons and acting together when armed and having more immediate access to the greatest means of force, their view of their own duty to act would be changed. However, our interview material does nothing to substantiate this hypothesis. The explanation for this is probably complex.

An evaluation is, by its nature, backward looking. It should provide answers to what happened and why. When asked if being armed had

influenced their view of their duty to act, it was natural for the informants to relate this to incidents that had taken place during the period of temporary, general arming of the force. As Kristin Hellesø-Knutsen (2013) shows in her dissertation *Jakten på risiko* [*The hunt for risk*], police officers' perceptions of risk are generally significantly more affected by the potential consequences of an unwanted incident, than by the probability of it occurring. However, this is less relevant to an evaluation, as it has no possibility of escaping from what actually happened, that is, from the probability. In the interviews, none of the informants had, during the period of being armed, encountered any situation where they needed to make immediate use of their firearm (neither threatening with it nor firing shots), and where, in being unarmed, they would have to have spent time asking for permission to be armed or deciding themselves to be armed, finding the weapon or loading it. The reason for this is probably that instances where weapons storage in the police car does not provide sufficient preparedness are quite few.

Those we interviewed graduated from The Police School /Police University College between 1988 and 2012. It was principally the 'ordinary' officers who were asked about the duty to act. It is tempting to think that the majority of these had a service-time of between 5 and 10 years.²⁴ This suggests that they will, likely, have had weapons stored in their police vehicles throughout their entire career. With the exception of those, probably quite few, cases where a situation arises so quickly or unexpectedly that the implementation of arming constitutes a decisive delay, this means that when it came to access to and need for firearms, those interviewed would have experienced little difference in serious incidents before, during and after the period when they were routinely armed. In the light of this, it is not in itself surprising that the temporary general arming did not affect their view of the duty to act. On the contrary, the interviews confirmed that because the situations during the period of being armed so closely resembled those they had previously experienced or trained on, they used the same tactical approach to solving their assignments before, during and after the period of temporary general arming of the force.

24 With consideration to anonymity, individuals were not asked about length of service.

However, this is not to say that situations where it is important to be generally armed do not arise, nor that none occurred during the period when officers were generally armed. Analysis of the police districts' response to POD from early in the period of general arming (cf. Section 3.7), showed that there were examples of officers being able to stop and arrest a person behaving threateningly with a knife more quickly because they were already armed.

What both the examples at Section 3.7 and our interviews show, is that situations will occur where the police will be better placed to respond in being already armed. However, this is something different than that their view of the duty to act has changed. Our questioning about the duty to act was primarily aimed at elucidating if the temporary arming led to officers feeling, to a greater extent, a need to resolve matters themselves, not waiting for assistance or using pre-rehearsed tactics. Our interview material offers no indication of this.

With the benefit of hindsight, it is possible to see that the interview guide had a weakness at this point. In that the interviewees had not experienced, during the period when they carried arms routinely, any situations where being armed had made a difference in relation to whether they had been able to act adequately or not in a crisis, they probably had difficulty in understanding where we wanted to go with the rather open question about the duty to act. Both the quoted answers and the reaction we experienced during the interviews lend support to this. We may well have received better answers had we asked the question as follows: *Did you experience, when you were routinely armed, situations that made you consider prudence in relation to the duty to act, differently than you have done when unarmed?*

4.3. Resolution of assignments

4.3.1. Planning, management of use of resources

When, during the time of general arming, officers undertaking their routine duties were equipped with the most powerful means of exerting force, one possible effect could have been that their assignments

were poorly planned, because in the event of an unforeseen negative development one could always 'turn to the gun.' There were also grounds to fear that, for the same reason, fewer or less competent resources would be committed. The interviews in no way lent substance to these concerns: rather the reverse. In relation to this, there is also reason to refer to what has been said above about risk communication (cf. Point 4.3.2.). In this context, planning and management will substantially form the content of the risk communication between the responding officers outside and the control room supervisor. We should recall what was said before (cf. Point 4.3.2.) - that the time, outside of the period of general arming, spent in arguing to one's superiors the case for being armed was, instead, available to the incident commanders for planning and for leading their crews.

The main impression given by the interviews with all three ranks making up our informants was that the period of temporary, general arming of the police had no effect on how assignments were planned and led.²⁵ For some incident commanders, however, the general arming did, to some extent, affect the way in which they assembled the patrol in terms of experience, that is, that no two completely inexperienced officers were put together in the same patrol.

The same main impression prevailed when it came to use of resources. No one thought that there had been situations during the period of temporary, general arming of the police when they had chosen to send officers with less experience and competence on assignments during the armaments period, on the grounds that they were armed. There was, for example, no one who had found that officers from IP3 were not sent or called out on the grounds that the entire ordinary operational force were armed.

On one point, however, the interviews yielded surprising answers regarding use of resources. Certain of the control room supervisors pointed to the general arming of the force having led to them committing more resources to operations in some instances, because it felt unsafe to

25 Sandham et al., 2016 have in interviews with operation room supervisors and incident commanders, made partly different findings.

send in just a single patrol – especially with inexperienced officers. They had therefore chosen to send in more people where they were able to do so. From the control room supervisor’s point of view, therefore, the general carrying of weapons seems to have been seen as an additional risk, rather than as ‘an extra tool’ making the officers more able to find a better resolution of incidents.

4.3.2. Competence

Many of the informants said that they had felt somewhat uncertain when first temporarily armed, indicating that they had missed a clear framework and routines being in place, guiding their being armed – when, for example, to be unarmed, whether the weapon was to be loaded and cocked, or not. The uncertainty around this was experienced by some as being unsafe. Several also mentioned having ‘limped along’ with the equipment, especially the gun holster, when asked if they had been properly equipped for carrying arms.

Everyone, irrespective of their role, mentioned the need for more training. This was mentioned by both those comfortable handling a weapon, and those who were not; where a weapon is concerned ‘one can never be good enough’. Although many wanted further training, most felt ready to carry a weapon, and most felt that their colleagues were too. Behind this optimism was their basic training leading to IP4 certification, and their imprinting with the principle of least use of force and the pyramid of power. All informants agreed that these form a solid foundation for being routinely armed. All had occupied the role of either control room supervisor, incident commander or ordinary police officer during this period of being generally armed. To make the rota work without breaching working hours regulations, at some police stations detectives were called upon to don their uniform and fulfil operative duties at weekends on a six to eight-week rotation. Although they had retained their IP certification, some informants were nonetheless doubtful that they were adequately prepared for general armed service.

In considering accidental discharges, some informants argued that not everyone within the police was ready to carry weapons, whilst

commenting that the media had maintained a very strong focus on this issue. The uncertainty felt by many initially seemed to have disappeared once they became familiarised with being armed on duty.

4.3.3. Use of protective clothing

Most of our informants had not experienced protective equipment being used differently, or less under the period of being generally armed. Where situations had arisen requiring such equipment, they had used it exactly as they otherwise would have done.

Some thought that it may have been different in a situation calling for an immediate response and where they had already left the police vehicle. Being armed, in these circumstances, could have led them to proceed without protection. This was purely hypothetical, however, as none had had any such experience; being armed had therefore had no effect, in practice, on the use of such equipment.

4.4. Serious incidents related to weapon handling

Analysis of reported instances showed that there had been more accidental shots fired and attempts to take weapons from police officers during the period of temporary, general arming than in the following period, although we must bear in mind that the duty to report such things applied only during the period of being armed. Nonetheless, the rise was to be expected, given the large number of police personnel carrying loaded weapons daily. Human and mechanical errors can never be eradicated completely. Most of the accidental shots were loosed within the police's own premises, plus a couple in a police vehicle. Typical situations included drawing and maintaining the gun and testing holsters. Four instances led to injury to police officers, with two falling within the period of general arming (September 2015 to July 2016) being relatively serious. Seen in this light, accidental weapon discharges seem to represent mostly a health and safety issue for the police. However, the cases where function testing of the holster resulted in accidental shots also showed

that attempts to deprive the police of weapons could potentially represent a risk of unintentional firing, even where the weapon was not removed from the holster. In this, the temporary arming as it was practiced with chambered bullets, also posed a potential risk to the public. We asked our informants if they had own personal experience of such incidents: unsurprisingly, few had. Some came with examples having thought about it a little, but these were either a widely known incident in the district or something an acquaintance or colleague had experienced. To the extent that someone mentioned the accidental discharge of a weapon, it concerned emptying and de-cocking of the gun. Some also mentioned 'clumsy' incidents. Where attempts to take weapons from the police were concerned, some could tell of occasions where someone had tried this, but mostly in connection with 'drinking in town', and these were, as one informant said, what might be called 'vain attempts at ... drunken tomfoolery, where someone fancied taking a look at the weapon and seeing what would happen if he took it.'

4.5. Attitudes

There was a clear preponderance of positive experiences of being armed during this period. Our material also showed consistently that this period had engendered greater positivity toward permanent arming of the police among our informants. Those who still harboured doubts mostly voted against 'yes to being armed'. Those, in our survey, who were still against permanent, general arming were so largely on practical grounds. This was particularly evident in our interviews with officers from UP, who saw it both as unnecessary and, practically speaking, unhelpful. This last is interesting in that there are few roles in the police leading to as much contact with an unknown public as in UP.

The interviews gave no indication of variations in attitude according to seniority, role or gender. This may be due to there being broad agreement in the police on this subject, while the temporary armament had created still further consensus. In the chapter on methodology, we discussed whether this might reflect the interview guide not having succeeded in

asking the 'right' questions, those which would have disclosed nuances, or whether the sample was poorly put together.

However, our findings are comparable with those from other relevant research, including questionnaire surveys among police officers. Skjevraak's (2016) study found that the proportion of final year students in favour of being permanently armed rose from 32% in 2013 to 84% in 2016 (cf. Point 1.6). She also found that factors such as gender and view of a profession in the police (autonomy) no longer held any significance for attitude towards being armed (Fekjær & Strype, 2015). That there seems to have been a significant change of mood in recent years, and especially in connection with the temporary armament, is supported by data from the so-called RECPOL survey²⁶ - *Recruitment, education and careers in the Police: A European Longitudinal study*. RECPOL is an international research project, initiated by PHS, which has followed police students in three phases: when they started their training (2010), completed their studies (2013) and three years into their career (2016). One of the principal advantages of such a study is following the same person and being, therefore, able to say with certainty that any change in attitude toward arming between 2013 and 2016 is real and not accounted for by different samples of informants. If one looks at the 142 respondents who were involved in both Phase 2 (2013) and Phase 3 (2016), one sees that 29% were in favour of arming the police in 2013, but 77% in 2016. Further, an unpublished survey among operative officers in Vestoppland police district (N=30) in February 2015, that is, three months into the period of temporary, general arming, found that approximately two thirds of respondents wanted permanent arming of the Norwegian police. When asked about their view a year earlier, approximately the same number had been opposed. It can be argued that none of these investigations represents a cross-section of the Norwegian police, and that all have weaknesses but, taken together, they point to a significant change of mood in the Norwegian police during the period of a temporarily armed police.

26 <http://www.phs.no/forskning/forskningsomrader/politiets-organisasjon-kultur-og-adferd/recpol/>

5. Discussion & implications

5.1. Introduction

The mandate for this evaluation was set out in four main questions containing subsidiary-points:

- What significance had being armed for the police's contact with the public? Including how response personnel approached the public, how they behaved in large crowds, were there situations they avoided, how did it affect officers' feeling of safety (positively, negatively) after their stance regarding being armed is taken into account?
- What significance had the temporary arming of the police for officers' risk assessment, communication of risk (between the control room and responding officers and between responding officers, including the incident commander) and perception of risk?
- What significance had being armed for the police's tactical response, including planning, leadership, use of resources, expertise, use of protective equipment?
- What was the extent of serious incidents related to weapons handling (such as accidental discharges, attempts to deprive officers of loaded weapons and any other situations of risk) during the period of temporary, general arming of the police? The circumstances under which these situations arose should also be investigated.

The evaluation has addressed the first three of these bullet points by means of a qualitative approach, with structured and semi-structured interviews. The final point has been answered through different document analyses. The evaluation took place between 23rd June 2016 and 31st January 2017. The results of the evaluation were presented in Chapter 4.

In concluding, it may be helpful to discuss and summarise some of the results more generally, and thereby make visible what the evaluation has neither provided, nor was intended to provide, answers to, indicating some possible future research topics.

5.2. What has gone unanswered?

5.2.1. Public reaction to arming of the police

We should first point out that our evaluation is not a normative report: it concerns the police's own opinions. As part of a forthcoming discussion of the values involved in the debate about a permanently, generally armed Norwegian police, larger research-based public surveys should be conducted.

The police's contact with the public was central to our evaluation. How did the police react in meeting the public, both during ordinary everyday duties and in more chaotic and unpredictable situations of public disorder and suchlike? The evaluation revealed a police force united in the view that the period of being armed had in no way affected their approach to these. They thought that an open approach to the public in ordinary service was important, and this concerned communication skills. In more confrontational encounters with the public, our informants relied on training in, and ability to apply, the principle of minimum means and an incremental increase in the use of force in accordance with the power pyramid. In this, proportionality is crucial, and being armed should not change this. The same applied when discussing, at different levels, tactical incident resolution. Here, as well, the informants were agreed that being armed had not changed this, either positively or negatively. To a large extent, our findings in these matters are comparable to those of Sandham and Todnem's master's thesis, *Midlertidige bevæpnet* [*Temporarily armed*] (2016).

Although there seemed to be a fair degree of unanimity within the police force that the temporary, general arming of the police had no bearing on their relationship with the public, the relationship between the public and the police is not covered by this evaluation.

The evaluation has nothing to say about that part of the public having no contact with the police during the period when they were armed, either because they kept away precisely because the police *were* armed, or because they had no reason to make contact. If, for example, armed police

go into a grocery shop in connection with shoplifting, the shop staff get no real sense of how the customers in the store react to them. Unless the police ask the public directly for their response to the guns, the meeting between police officers and the public will amount to ‘looking at yourself tells you nothing about others’ (Ihlen & Ihlen, 2011). That officers think that the meeting with the public was as before, tells us little about what the public actually made of it.

The temporary, general arming of the police was based primarily on PST’s assessment of the terror threat. Norway has experienced a serious terror attack in the recent past. In addition, even more recently, there have been further attacks in what must be considered, in today’s media- and communication-driven society, as our own backyard – Denmark, Germany, Belgium and France. As Sandham and Todnem (2016) point to in their master’s thesis, this may have affected the public’s willingness to accept an armed police: they were ‘working for a safe city’,²⁷ and given such a threat, being armed needs must be accepted. Unless one considers the terrorist threat as permanent, it is not a given that this perception will persist under more normal circumstances.

5.2.2. Is there a difference between what they say and what they do?

Our evaluation is based on retrospective interviews with all the strengths and weaknesses this involves (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2010, pp. 72-74). As is partly illustrated below in Section 5.3., such an after-the-event investigation may be coloured by how the period of being armed actually went. Although there was a certain focus on unintentional firing of shots (accidental discharge, cf. Section 4.5), there were hardly more than predicted by ‘the law of large numbers’. All in all, the 14 months of the temporary, general arming, passed without any serious incidents affecting the public. When officers later give their account of it, their stories can be characterised by ‘we managed this’, becoming a little like ‘childhood summers’, the rainy days forgotten.

Moreover, we see that the Norwegian police’s view of being armed is,

27 A minor re-writing of Oslo Police District’s slogan: ‘Working for a safe capital city’.

today, considerably more positive than it was a few years ago. Speaking generally, this may, in itself, add to the wish to present the period of being temporarily armed more positively than the reality might suggest. This could apply, not least, within a debate (cf. Section 1.4.) as politically charged as that around the permanent arming of the police. As Sandham and Todnem write (2016, p. 109 with reference to Perrow):

The desire to show that the temporary arming was handled well may also be a contributor to the informants' assertion that the contact was just as good. Perrow (1948) mentions in Normal Accident Theory that true reporting of negative findings is difficult to achieve, because managers, in particular, want processes to appear successful. Own achievements are therefore presented overly positively in relation to what is actually the case (Perrow, 1984). In addition, Perrow argues that policy-driven reporting tends to favour the strongest direction.

If another period of temporary, general arming of the police is ordered, follow-up research or action research projects will be needed (Nielsen & Nielsen, 2010). A study including participatory observation in its approach will be able to see if words and actions match. Hans P. Lade's master's thesis is an important contribution to the development of knowledge about arming the police precisely because participatory observation showed that there was not always correspondence between word and deed (Hans Petter Lade, 2016).

5.2.3. Will the positive experience prove to be lasting?

The perception of, and support for, a permanently, generally armed police has changed markedly since 2011. Our interviews, figures from RECPOL (cf. Section 4.6) and, for example, Skjevraak's (2016) master's thesis show that the police as an organisation are now very much in agreement about the need for a permanently armed force.²⁸

28 Sandham and Todnem (2016) also found that some of their informants told them that they had become more positive toward a general arming of the police.

This unanimity has been reinforced during the period of temporary, general arming. There may be many reasons for this, but the one most evinced is that it went well, nothing went wrong. The police find themselves to have passed a test. That not one of our informants could point to episodes in this period in which assignments had been resolved in a different way because they carried weapons, may be thought of as confirmation that the police, in being armed, can continue to adapt proportionately to situations; not using their weapons disproportionately. Another way of looking at this is that maybe permanent arming is not necessary: as proposed above (Point 5.2.2.), there is reason to question whether this is a fully comprehensive description.

The combination of a distinct change of attitude toward general arming of the police, of the force being able, rightly, to claim that they 'passed the test presented by the temporary 14-month arming of the force, and that the question of arming of the Norwegian police has been placed on the political agenda through the arming committee, makes a decision on permanent general arming a real possibility.

Neither this present evaluation, nor Sandham and Todnem's (2016, p. 121) master's thesis, provide an answer as to whether the positive experience from the period of temporary arming will prove lasting. All officers who were armed during this period have been through a training which taught them that ordinary incidents were to be resolved without immediate recourse to weapons. Although the legal framework, theoretical training, tactical guidelines and training remain as before, no one is able today to say either whether or how the long-term effects of being armed daily will affect service delivery. This question is addressed in Christina Helen Helstad and Silje Madelene Ingjer's (2016) master's thesis in criminology, *Bevæpning av politiet – for sikkerhets skyld? [Arming the police – for safety's sake?]*. Unsurprisingly, there was disagreement between the different focus groups interviewed as to what it would mean if future police officers had no experience of being unarmed. The focus group comprising police officers argued that the training would be same, and that being armed would therefore not lead to changes in the way incidents were resolved. Those comprising students and people from a

minority background were, on the other hand, more concerned about the change that general arming of the police might make to the culture of the Norwegian police service.

5.2.4. Experienced or acquired unanimity?

In the evaluation, attitudes toward, and positive view of, being armed were based on the same rhetoric, stories and examples. These were narratives, or justifications, repeated across gender, seniority, geography and age, and used to legitimate a positive view of a permanently armed police. There can be two explanations for this uniformity: either the police in operational service have had the same experiences regardless of where and for how long they have served, or some relatively limited incidents have spread through the culture of storytelling that is characteristic within the force. Hellesø-Knutsen (2013) writes about the 'stories of the big catch' and refers, in this connection, to Clifford Shearing and Richard Ericson (2005, p. 322):

At times, whole stories are told as informative or representative anecdotes that select and highlight reality, like Weber's ideal types, to provide cautionary or exemplary messages.

Other ethnographic studies confirm this and show that storytelling in the police serves many other purposes (van Hulst, 2013) than those indicated by Shearing and Ericson (2005). In the interviews, the leading argument was that it was good to have access at all times to the full range of means of exerting force. Expressions such as 'using all the tools in the toolbox' or why is there no access to 'all the tools in the toolbox' were constantly repeated. The gun is a tool, the most serious the police can threaten to use or use in their encounter with the public. Its use is legal, governed by the pyramid of power and considerations of necessity and proportionality. Why then are limits placed on its availability? The metaphor of the 'toolbox' has been used so often in the debate about arming the police over the last five or six years, that it has become part of the internal police jargon the origin of which no one reflects on. It was nonetheless surprising that none of our informants saw that the 'tool' is not in the 'box' when the

police are generally armed, but is, on the contrary, visible and thereby helping to increase the power at the lowest level in the power pyramid; the police presence also referred to as 'symbolic power'.

The next part of the story is what we refer to as 'sixth floor in a block'. The story tells of the police meeting a desperate person, armed with a knife or firearm who is about to injure himself, others, or the police in an incident. Why, then, do they have to run down to fetch weapons? Who takes responsibility for this and what happens if the police return, and the 'worst thing' has happened? Undoubtedly, such things happen. Reports from the police districts (referred to in Section 3.7) contain just such an example that nearly came to that. And Sandham and Todnem (2016), through their interviews with control room supervisors and incident commanders, also found instances of the same, but no one seems able to say how often:

Several of the informants said that they used the principle of 'there was doubt, then there was no doubt', meaning that they provided arms in some situations where the material conditions were not present. This can also be understood as what the informants in this survey describe as taking account of 'the worst imaginable'. This is about putting in place measures against the worst possible consequence based on a risk assessment, while indicators from the RE perspective [Resilience Engineering] concern continuous monitoring so that one remains ahead of future changes in the situation (Hollnagel, Woods & Leveson, 2006).

The informants were not asked, during the interviews, about the number of such events, and therefore their extent did not become apparent in the survey. This may have allowed the incidences that emerged from the interviews to have gained disproportionate weight. Several of the examples appeared nevertheless as recent, personal experiences, and they were told in the first person. The same stories were not repeated by several informants, leading them to appear to be unique. A picture was thus formed, through the interviews, of such incidents occurring sometimes, although not often.

As a premise for a possible decision about a permanent general arming

of the Norwegian police, it therefore seems to be a key task to find out if there have been 400-500 incidents, or four or five incidents recounted one hundred times.

The final part of the story, legitimating a positive attitude towards permanently arming the police, was about the development of criminality in society; particularly in connection to mental illness, drug misuse and knife carrying. This does seem to be a real development. In his master's thesis, Jan Erik Haugland (2015) found that a significant part of the increase in the number of arming orders granted in recent years, was accounted for by persons carrying a knife, often in combination with being mentally ill and /or having taken drugs.

Although, in the last three or four years, there has been significantly more research into arming of the police and weapons use than ever before, there is little reliable quantitative knowledge about the scope of the stories that the officers reference. In addition to gaining knowledge about this, the challenge for future research will be to try to trace the processes constituting, shaping and making the stories about the need for an armed police into a coherent and correct story. Which social and cultural processes combine to create this consensus across the 'entire police force'.

5.2.5. Justifications, limitations and practice

However, what is documented through our evaluation is a significant difference between the definition of the situation in the political rationale for the temporary arming of the police and the reasons given for the in-practice acceptance of it in operational policing. The rationale for the temporary arming was a politically somewhat ill-defined threat justified by an international situation where uniformed officers could be the target of terror attacks. Very few, if any, of our informants were worried about this,²⁹ but they were, as previously discussed, pleased to be armed in the course of their everyday duties. The same finding was made by Sandham and Todnem (2016) and by Lade (2016) in respect of Salten

29 Had we interviewed uniformed, operative personnel from Oslo police district, it is likely that we would have had a different result, cf. both Sandham and Todnem (2016) and Lade (2016).

and Gudbrandsdal police districts respectively, namely that officers saw being armed as a practical approach to routine policing, having nothing whatsoever to do with terror or organised crime.³⁰

As already mentioned in Section 1.2., POD decided, already in a letter of 23rd November 2014, that in implementing the temporary arming, there should be functional relativity – police could be unarmed where being armed was ‘little compatible with service delivery and where the risk of attack as described in the threat assessment was not present’. Despite this, several of our informants expressed the view that they had violated the order to be armed when they elected to disarm in situations where they found being armed impractical and the threat minimal. Further into the period of being temporarily armed, this functional relativity was concretised so that weapons should not apply during ‘planned preventive police duties aimed at children and young people’ (cf., letter from the Police Directorate of 20th August 2015).³¹ Conversely, some of our informants argued that they found this exception to being armed meaningless and had therefore opposed it. As they saw it, the possibility of a so-called ‘school shooting’ was one of the most likely forms of terror, and it would have been ridiculous if the police had to run to their vehicle to pick up weapons had they been at a school for crime prevention duties or something similar and such a shooting had taken place (cf. also Sandham & Todnem, 2016, p. 99).

What we found through our interviews was a practice-orientated force which converted an order to be armed on a national basis to something that made sense to them locally. In classic studies (Willis, 1990), such form-generating processes are defined, described and understood as being cultural processes. Future studies of the police’s handling of weapons may possibly be defined as a part of cultural studies within or of the police.

30 At leadership level in the police districts, the assessment was, nonetheless, that there was a real terror threat, cf., the risk and vulnerability analysis undertaken in May 2015 and discussed at the beginning of Section 1.2.

31 The letter is dated 20th August 2015 and has the reference 201404184.

5.3. General arming of the police as possibility, reality and experience

The question of whether the Norwegian police force should be armed in undertaking ordinary duties has been on the agenda since the Norwegian Police Confederation (PF) decided, at their national meeting in Alta in 2010, to appoint 'a broad-based committee to discuss and assess all aspects of arming the Norwegian police, including that the police shall carry weapons permanently' (see the report *Generell bevæpning av norsk politi [General arming of the Norwegian police]*, p. 8). This committee, in conjunction with Professor Liv Finstad, produced a 'Survey regarding arming'. The questionnaire contained a long list of questions and was sent out to 8004 potential respondents, of which 4552 replied to some or all questions. These answers were given in June 2014. The survey and answers are discussed in more detail by Professor Liv Finstad in Appendix 4 of the report *General arming of the Norwegian police* produced by the Police Federation's committee (Finstad, 2011)

Some of the questions included in PF's 2011 quantitative survey, concern the same topics as those posed to the sample of police officers in our qualitative interview survey during November and December 2016. To a certain extent, there is also a convergence between the issues in the 2011 survey, our interview guide from 2016 and the questions posed by POD to the police districts and specialist agencies in January and February 2015 (cf., Section 3.7.).

It is, naturally, not possible to draw conclusions on the basis of a comparative interpretation of these datasets. First, the selections are very different: basically, all members of PF vs. one or two representatives of the leadership in the police districts and specialist agencies vs. a selection of operational officers in four police districts and one specialist agency. The methods are as various as the informants: a quantitative survey vs. compulsory official reporting to the superior body vs. completely voluntary participation in a qualitative interview survey. When we nonetheless elect to make a concise mention of these different sources, it is because it gives a certain indication of whether the view of some

key questions has been influenced by being armed representing an opportunity, a reality or an experience.

5.3.1. Skills and training

An issue included in all three sources is the question of whether the officers have sufficient training and expertise to be generally armed, or whether a general arming of the force will trigger a need for training.

In PF's survey, this is addressed by means of two statements to which the respondents were to answer 'agree', 'disagree' or 'neither agree nor disagree': *'Permanent arming will require more resources for training'* and *'Permanent arming means that stricter measures will be required for certification'*.

Taken together, these two propositions cover the question of whether the Norwegian police were considered sufficiently well trained to deal with the situation of being generally armed during operational duties. The questions were answered largely the same, but there was a somewhat larger proportion agreeing that being generally armed would require more resources for training than there were agreeing that it would call for stricter regulation of certification. However, if we combine these answers, in 2011 more than 75% thought that generally arming the police would require more and better training. Ten percent disagreed with this, while the other respondents had nothing to say about it. The survey says nothing about the areas where the officers thought there would be a need for further training. It is therefore entirely possible that quite a few had in mind that being armed would require more resources for training in various arrest techniques with weapons on the hip, and training crews to keep their weapon holstered in situations where other means of force are sufficient to solve the task.

There is another factor which must be taken into account, and which, in particular, distinguishes PF's survey from the interviews in 2016. The 2011 questions were addressed to all PF members, irrespective of whether they performed uniformed operational duties. The answers

are therefore likely to be influenced by the participation of investigation officers, who may well not have kept their IP certification at the same level. Naturally, therefore, these will have felt the need for further training. It is also likely that some in the uniformed operational officers had their colleagues in investigator positions in mind in responding to the need for training. The answers given in both our interviews (see below) and in Lade's (2016) master's thesis appear to support this to a certain extent. Lade's informants expressed great confidence in officers in their own division and on their own watch but had greater reservations about the 'weapons competence' of officers occupying other police roles. In some police districts, officers, working as, for instance, detectives, have had, every six to eight weeks, been required to occupy uniformed roles during the weekend to maintain an adequate level of staffing. Considering how seldom the Norwegian police actually use firearms, it is perhaps unsurprising that officers making such 'guest appearances' were met with a certain scepticism by the ordinary operational crews (cf. the response from a control room supervisor).

Despite these reservations, the overall impression of the answers to PF's survey is that, in 2011, approximately 75% of PF's members believed that the Norwegian police, having undergone the training provided at the time, were inadequately trained to cope with being generally armed.

In the reports that police districts and specialist agencies were to make to POD, the question was: *Does general arming of the police reveal further educational and training needs?*

Of the 25 police districts and specialist agencies responding to POD's question, 15 said that this was not the case, 10 replied by agreeing that more training would be required, emphasising, principally, the need for enhanced training in arrest techniques – training with a view to protecting the gun whilst being engaged in situations requiring the use of force, rather than justifications for the threat to use (or use of) the weapon itself. As mentioned above at Point 3.7., the difference between the 'yes' and 'no' answers is probably a consequence of how extensively the various districts saw fit to answer. Many of those answering 'no' would probably

nonetheless agree with the need for a certain change to the training in arrest techniques.

Here, too, it is possible that one has had uniformed operational crews in mind. But the answers were given after Meld. St. 21 (2012-2013) *Terrorberedskap* [*Terrorism preparedness*], where the responsibility for maintaining IP training for the crews was stressed (cf. the report's p. 79).

If one keeps a focus on the main impression. It is impossible to see beyond that when the temporary, general arming of the police was a reality, and had been so for two or three months, two thirds of police districts and special agencies found police officers' expertise to be adequate.

In our investigation, the questions about competence and the need for further training were formulated as follows: *When the period of temporary, general arming began, did you need a re-run of the 'gun course' or anything else from the re-certification of shooting? And: Were the police equipped for a period of being temporarily armed?*

The overwhelmingly dominant impression of the answers to these questions was that control room supervisors, incident commanders and ordinary operational police believed that the police had been adequately equipped for the period of being temporarily, generally armed.

Yes, there's been a lot of focus on this about being armed, and lots has been said about it, it's hardly a fresh topic – it's hardly as if it suddenly fell out of the sky, and given that we've had weapon storage in the cars and so on, so we've gradually, step by step maybe, become more used to it, and the IP training has then, in a way, become something quite different to what it was, for better or worse, but mostly for the better I think.

Despite the general perception that the police were well equipped for the period of being temporarily armed, almost everyone pointed out that it came abruptly and that it would have been helpful to have had some guidelines for being armed on ordinary 'non-acute' duties, and that it

would have been appropriate to have some training in protecting the weapon. Despite feeling equipped, many argued that when it came to handling firearms, one could never get enough training.

Quite a few also mentioned the number of accidental discharges in this context. The following from a response officer is quite representative:

Yes, what should I say? The accidental discharges show that some indeed have been ill equipped, but the police generally, when you see the number of accidental discharges and the number of times weapons have been loaded and de-cocked, so the twenty something accidental discharges disappear a bit into the overall statistics, but there're still enough for it to be understandable that the public react, that the public do in fact have the right to have a bit of a go at the police when we do manage to have that many accidental shots fired.

An incident commander also points out that in this field you can never be good enough, but that the skills do vary a lot within the force, dependent, for example, on whether officers undertake uniformed operational duties on a daily basis:

No, the answer must obviously be no. I mean, because we can never be good enough. But compared with other countries, we appear to be well trained and to be well equipped, but we do lack numbers in operational manpower. And then there's support crews, like those we get from the investigation branch and those who work a bit outside but mostly inside, and yes, they support us at the weekends and things like that, they don't use weapons daily, and then you see that they're maybe a bit more uncertain and things like that, so that's a question of training, and, of course, we should have more training and the opportunity for that.

In considering the value of the dominant view of those we interviewed being that the police were sufficiently equipped and trained to be generally armed, account should be taken that several of the informants emphasised that the period went well and that they felt more equipped

now than before the temporary arming came into force.

No, being temporarily armed, I think it went amazingly well for us. I think that we, there was nothing really, the only thing at the beginning was how it should be with the gun, if it should be half-loaded or kept fully loaded.

5.3.2. Safety of the police

The way in which being armed would affect / affected the safety of police officers, was a topic in both PF's survey in 2011 and in our interviews in 2016.

In PF's questionnaire, their members were asked if they 'agreed' with, 'disagreed' with or were neither 'in agreement nor disagreed' with two propositions:

Being permanently armed will make the police's working day safer.

Being permanently armed will lead to the police's working day involving more risk.

Their respondents were quite mixed in their opinion about this. Regarding the proposition that being armed would make their day riskier, 41% agreed and 25% disagreed, while 34% had no view. On the 'opposing' proposition, that being armed would make their day safer, 32% agreed, 31% disagreed and 37% neither agreed nor disagreed. It may be reasonable to suppose that a majority of the 41% who agreed that being permanently armed would make police duties riskier, were among those disagreeing that a general arming of the police would make the working day safer, and vice versa. If this is correct, we would be justified in assuming that, in 2011, PF's members were divided into three roughly equal groups in their view of whether being generally armed would make the service safer or not. However, as the discussion below about the interview study shows, the view of being armed and safe can depend

on the kind of assignments one had in mind when taking a stand on the claims about safety and risk. It is entirely possible for the same person to answer in the affirmative both that being generally armed will make the working day both riskier and safer.

In our interviews, the informants addressed the question of risk and safety particularly in connection with the following two questions:

When we speak of risk associated with police duties, what do you think of?

Did being armed hold any significance for your perception of risk in the assignments you took part in/observed?

They touched on the same problem in connection with how officers behaved in relation to the public, especially in large and dense crowds and when dealing with 'people out on the town'.

The general impression formed by the informants' answers was that being routinely armed left them feeling safer with regard to two types of situations: one being those very rare situations, which none of the informants had experienced during the period of being generally armed, where a third party or officers found themselves exposed without warning to life-threatening violence. The other, more frequent, situation, where officers arrive at an incident where what is happening or those involved suggest that a more acutely violent situation could develop. The standard example given of this was that of a domestic disturbance on the sixth floor where officers were suddenly faced with a person with a gun or knife. An incident commander's answer about whether being armed affected his assessment of the risk in such cases is illustrative:

Really, what I think having sat and thought back to that time ... I ponder a bit about these cases where we were in doubt and we had a kind of discussion with the control room supervisor – maybe when a person was 'flagged up' as dangerous, you know, or a shovel was used in an act of violence, or a baseball bat – so then maybe you get

into a discussion with the control room supervisor, should we arm ourselves, or not? But when you had it on your hip, and now I'm just being honest, maybe at fault in terms of Weapons Instructions and so on, but then it became like; OK, fine, if it should get so spicy that he actually came running after us with that bat there and started knocking down my partner and is about to smash his head so well, then I'm ready. So true enough, that risk there, that perception probably had something to do with it.

On the other hand, it was made perfectly clear in the interviews that the temporary general arming of the force created an additional risk factor in the conduct of everyday duties, quite possibly leading to the police resorting to the use of force, where making use of firearms was completely inappropriate. The danger of having an officer's weapon taken away from them constituted this risk. Uncertainty about if it would be possible to protect the weapon in these circumstances was central. The importance of being in contact with your partner so that one could help, or get help from, them was also emphasised. This also featured in Lade's master's thesis (2016, pp. 85-86)

Just this of patrolling alone was brought up by many of the informants. They made the point that being on patrol alone after the temporary arming was introduced was a worry regarding the safety of their weapon. The main argument was that you are more vulnerable when on your own. It is more difficult to defend yourself against a possible attack, and the risk of being put out of play and having your weapon taken is greater. Many of the informants said quite clearly, therefore, that they were unwilling to go out on patrol alone as long as they were armed. Nonetheless, during my fieldwork, I was out on patrol where there was only a single officer. On one occasion I was out with a manager who was alone because the roster didn't, on this occasion, allow of two-man patrols. The other was an officer who drove alone from their base to a traffic accident and who would subsequently join a patrol. Both officers said that this represented an 'exception to the rule' and that they were extra careful on account of being armed. If they had had to attend an

incident where there was a perceived risk of meeting challenging circumstances, they would have agreed a meeting place and attended jointly from there.

One can raise the objection that under normal circumstances, without being armed, there are also problems associated with driving one-man patrols. There are doubtless differing practices in the different police districts, and there can be both practical and service considerations behind the choice to drive patrols single-handed. This practice has been controversial and, especially in the transition from an emergency response and home-based service to a full 24-hour service, being staffed with two or more in a patrol has been stressed as having a positive effect on the safety of police officers. However, one thing emerged quite clearly from the interviews and field interviews in my study, which was the informants' concerns about patrolling alone had been reinforced because of being temporarily armed. My material therefore shows clearly that the informants had more objections to driving a one-man patrol armed than unarmed. Nevertheless, there could be assessments and practical considerations suggesting that one chose to be armed, but not without hesitation.

It is therefore possible to conclude that, just as officers in 2011 thought of being armed as both safety-enhancing and a risk, the experience from the period of temporary, general arming of the police was much the same. Being armed brings more safety to those situations – which almost never occur – in which there is an imminent threat of life-threatening violence, and in those more everyday incidents where there is a risk of them developing into a violent situation. In respect, on the other hand, of ordinary commonplace assignments, being armed is seen as representing an additional risk factor.

5.3.3. Relationship with the public

The question of whether, and possibly how, a general armament affects the relationship between the police and the public is addressed in all three data sets.

In PF's questionnaire, there were four statements relevant to this topic that the respondents should decide on:

- Permanent arming will make the public more worried about the police.
- Permanent arming will increase the public's sense of safety.
Permanent arming will create conflict in the police's contact with the public.
- Permanent arming will make it more difficult for the police to resolve incidents at a lower level and with the least use of force.

Twenty-five to 28% of respondents agreed with the first three of these statements, while 36-40% did not agree and 35% neither agreed nor disagreed. Regarding the final statement, concerning the use of force, 36% were in agreement, 43% disagreed and 21% neither agreed nor disagreed.

The final point was also touched on in the police districts' reporting to POD. One of the questions was: *Does being armed affect ordinary police duties, including situations requiring the use of force, but not of weapons?* None of the 25 police districts and specialist agencies who replied reported there having been any increased in the use of force on account of being armed. What was reported was that carrying weapons called for more vigilance during physical interventions, and a single case of there having been reluctance to undertake preventive patrolling on foot where there were large (and intoxicated) crowds.

In our interviews, we asked our informants the following two questions:

- Did being armed affect the way you approached the public?
- Have there been situations that officers avoided?

Both questions were answered almost completely unanimously in the negative – by the ordinary operational officers, their commanders and the control room supervisors (cf. Section 3.3.). There was common agreement that being armed had not made any difference to the contact they made with the public, nor had they noticed any difference in how the public contacted them. In large or dense crowds, they were more vigilant in taking care of their weapon, and, in accordance with the guidelines issued

by POD in their letter of 23rd November 2014 (cf. Section 1.2), there were some duties during which officers elected to be unarmed.

Our informants were not asked directly if being routinely armed had made it more difficult to resolve incidents using the least possible force. However, when asked whether being generally armed affected the resolution of potentially 'acute' missions tactically, several concluded that even though they were armed, all use of force was carried out in accordance with the principle of minimum means and step-by-step escalation in accordance with the power pyramid and the tactical guidelines.

5.3.4. Summary

All three datasets registered, in their different ways, the police's own views. With due reservations about the uncertainty flowing from both selection and methods being different, we believe that it is possible to draw the following conclusions:

- The need for more and better training, expressed in the 2011 survey when being armed was only a possibility, was emphasised much less when general arming became a reality and, later, an experience.
- The negative effect that fully a quarter of PF's members expected being armed to have on the relationship with the public, was not at all evident among the informants we interviewed.
- Where there appears to be the greatest convergence between the perceptions in 2011 and those in 2016 after the period temporary arming had ended, is that being generally armed brings both added safety and increased risk. Our informants were clearest in arguing that being armed brought added safety to the very uncommon instances of acute violence as well as in the potentially dangerous, but unpredictable, situations they sometimes encountered. That the weapon also represented an additional risk factor became apparent more indirectly – through the contention made by the informants that carrying a weapon required greater vigilance in dense or large crowds, the need for staying in close communication with the partner officer

and the heightened reluctance to patrol alone. However, few if any described this in a way that could be understood as meaning that the temporary general arming of the force had made ‘the working day more risky for police officers’.

6. Conclusion

We conclude by offering a summary of the answers we found to the mandate's four main questions:

- **What effect has the period of general arming had on the police's contact with the public?**
 - There is virtual unanimity that the period of being armed had extremely limited significance for the way the police met the public.
 - To a certain extent, the informants emphasised that they were more vigilant in large crowds, and that they experienced a certain amount of discomfort in situations where they had to use physical force against third parties. No police duties failed to happen on account of their being armed.
 - There was a broadly unanimous perception among the informants that being armed had increased their sense of safety, especially in connection with assignments around which there was a measure of uncertainty. This applied in relation both to the personal safety of the officers and to the 'certainty' that incidents could be resolved 'there and then' even if the situation were to escalate.
- **What significance has the temporary, general arming of the police had for officers' risk assessment, communication of risk (between the operations room and responding officers, including the response team leaders)?**
 - Aspects of this question are less well answered because the informants seem to have an unclear view of the concept of risk.
 - The question about the communication of risk is answered satisfactorily. There was an overwhelming view that being armed had not had a negative effect on risk communication.

What significance had being armed for the resolution of incidents tactically, including planning, management, use of resources, expertise and use of protective equipment?

- The resolution of incidents tactically was little affected by being armed, according to our informants.
 - It was a feature, generally, that the informants emphasised that the requirement for a proportionate and gradual increase in the deployment of power in accordance with the pyramid of power was met the same even though they were now armed.
 - The informants said the planning and management of ‘acute’ assignments were not negatively affected by being armed. Rather, many insisted that preparation for such assignments was better during the period of being armed because no time had to be used to argue for permission to be armed or in readying weapons.
 - Being armed did not affect the use of protective equipment.
-
- What was the extent of serious incidents connected to weapons handling (such as accidental discharges, attempts to take loaded weapons from officers and other possible risk situations) during the period of temporary, general arming? The circumstances under which these serious incidents occurred should also be investigated.
 - Analysis of the reported serious incidents shows that there were more accidental weapon discharges and attempts to take guns from officers during the period of temporary arming than after it ended.
 - During the final five months of the period of the police being armed, there were 16 accidental discharges outside of the de-cocking box and 10 attempts to take an officer’s weapon were reported. Comparable figures for the five months after the period ended were three and none.
 - This is in line with expectations given that such a large number of officers were armed with loaded weapons daily.
 - Typical situations when accidental shots were fired were during de-cocking, maintenance and emptying of the weapon and function-testing of the holster.

In this report, we have also issues not covered by the mandate and to which our evaluation has not provided answers. In developing the knowledge base for the debate about permanent arming of the force, research should look to find answers to the following:

- What was the public's experience of the police being armed?
- Does what the officers say they did correspond with what they actually did?
- Will the positive experience of having been armed prove to be lasting?
- Does the considerable agreement within the police originate in 'experience or story-telling'?

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