Chapter 8 Explaining the 1973–1986 policy stability

The period between the 1973 inception of the Terrorist Act and the murder of Olof Palme is marked by policy stability in the Swedish counter-terrorism policy domain. Policy stability prevailed despite the fact that the period was interspersed by the seizure of the West German embassy, which at the time was a crisis of national magnitude. The analysis below will shed theoretical light on the puzzlingly low impact of the embassy drama, but also take into account the impact of other crises and events of relevance.

8.1 Belief-based perspective and policy stability 1973–1986

8.1.1 Terrorism legislation and Säpo: Deterring terrorists?

The Terrorist Act of 1973 was broadly supported in Parliament, both when it was instituted and when it was prolonged for the first time in the spring of 1974. Nonetheless, the political constituency for the legislation was weak. The Liberal party was principally concerned about the 'guilt by association' implications of the legislation, and the Communist party as well as elements of the Social Democratic party was uneasy over the way Säpo implemented the law. The personal requisite that was added to the organizational requisite with the 1976 partition broadened the law's support. The absence of a personal requisite was essentially contrary to a policy core belief of the Liberal party, and its introduction can be seen as policy-oriented learning. The policy change does not seem to have been politically costly for the Social Democratic Cabinet. On the

contrary, it helped in consolidating the Social Democratic movement. The issue was arguably a secondary aspect for the Social Democratic authors of the law. As we saw in part one, the Conservative party was initially against 'softening up' the fight against terrorism, as they first interpreted the suggested amendments' implications. But when they learned that Säpo had actually worked with a personal requisite from the beginning, they too endorsed the policy change.

The decade analyzed here was turbulent on the political and administrative fronts. The Social Democratic Cabinet lost power for the first time in 44 years in the 1976 general elections, which was followed by six years of non-socialist rule that saw four different governments. The head of Säpo and the general director of the National Police Board were replaced in 1976 and 1978 respectively. We will come back to these changes, but it suffices here to conclude that they did not affect support for the terrorist legislation as revised in 1976. The constituency for the new legislation transcended political blocks.

The embassy drama, in combination with terrorist events in the surrounding world, convinced Cabinet and the majority of Parliament that the plague of terrorism had come to stay. That was the motive for giving parts of the Terrorist Act permanent status. The offshoot of the Terrorist Act – the Special Investigations Act – was however too controversial and could not be given permanent status. But it was prolonged by Parliament by a broad majority every year. The Special Investigations Act entitled the police, in particular Säpo, to use coercive powers on a lower level of evidence than the Code of Judicial Procedure allowed for. Therefore that part of the terrorism legislation could not be separated from Säpo as an organization.

In the fall of 1975 an event unfolded that had nothing to do with terrorism, yet called Säpo's operative methods into question. It was revealed in October that year that a person had been employed by a hospital in Gothenburg to map out extreme leftists at the workplace on behalf of Säpo. At least Säpo became the scapegoat, even if some argue that IB orchestrated the arrangement (SOU 2002:87: 546-550). Illegal opinion monitoring, and thereby a need for better control mechanisms, became an issue that tainted the image of Säpo activities in general.

Säpo was the subject of a belief-based coalition. The Communist party and a faction of the Social Democratic party, especially when in opposition, distrusted Säpo's use of coercive powers. This coalition interpreted the hospital spy affair and later the Bergling affair as evidence of their policy core belief: that Säpo inherently and continuously abused their coercive powers to persecute innocent leftists. Because Säpo's attention was misdirected, they maintained, greater perils such as Bergling (and Wennerström a good decade previously) selling intelligence to foreign powers were overlooked (Motions 1979/80:802 and 803). But there did not exist a corresponding advocacy coalition taking

Säpo's side. In fact, during the non-socialist Cabinets there was no coherent coalition advocating police policies in general, which we will come back to in the following subsection. The non-socialist Cabinets had an ambition to make the Special Investigations Act permanent, but failed to do so since a working group looking into if and how Säpo used surplus information had been inconclusive, i.e. whether Säpo used information mustered from approved special investigations to corroborate other cases, to which the district court had not approved special search methods (Proposition 1981/82:45).

The original Terrorist Act was at best a secondary aspect for Säpo and the National Police Board. But the Special Investigations Act was considered instrumental for the police. The National Police Board referred to international terrorism development and argued, from a domestic perspective, that the Emergency Powers Act filled a preventive purpose. They kept the Cabinet updated on how the law had been used. Up until the fall of 1985 it had been used parsimoniously – only 13 cases since 1976 – but was nonetheless of utmost importance according to the police (Proposition 1985/86:31). It was arguably an interest of Säpo to retain the coercive powers allowed by the Special Investigations Act, but counter-terrorism was not the highest priority for the organization – counter-espionage was (Frånstedt 2003).

To justify the yearly propositions, the Cabinet published a chronology of terrorist attacks that had occurred around the world since the previous year, based on Säpo's account and a Foreign Ministry annual report. The terrorist threat could not be dismissed, even though such occurrences were rare in Sweden. In its renewal, the Cabinet followed the police's line of argument – that the law deterred terrorism.

8.1.2 Law and order policing: Decomposed coalitions, beliefs intact

The embassy drama stands out as the most chilling experience of terrorism on Swedish soil. According to Gösta Welander, the head of the Justice Ministry's police unit from 1972–1984, the embassy drama was the only incident during his tenure serious enough to force his ministry to take the issue of counter-terrorism preparedness into consideration (Welander 2003). We have seen that the drama caused both the Stockholm police and the National Police Board to promote policy options intended to better meet the threat of terrorism. But the embassy drama did not fundamentally alter ingrained ideas or beliefs about counter-terrorism police work, at least not in the first decade after the siege.

The National Police Board and the Stockholm police formed an advocacy coalition to try and influence counter-terrorism policies. For players outside the police, counter-terrorism policymaking was to a large extent a matter of taking

sides with or against the police. Thereby the police were left on their own to promote policy innovations that they found pertinent for combating terrorism. To some extent, General Director Carl Persson was himself the glue of this coalition. Reports of what an extraordinary leader, efficient and skilful manager, and charismatic person he was are striking (Welander 2003; Munck 2004; Axman 2004; Frånstedt 2003; Montgomery 2004, Nygren 2004; Falkenstam 1983; Vinge 1988).

We have already established that the police were not overly successful in convincing wider circles on the virtues of a powerful anti-terrorist police force. We have seen how the initial Stockholm police initiative was passed on to the Cabinet, which in turn forwarded the issue to the ongoing 1975 Police Commission. All of this happened between the embassy drama and the 1976 change in government. The question is if the Stockholm police initiative was inevitably futile at this time. Why were the police not successful in mobilizing support for their policy innovation?

The policy initiative's journey does not show any evidence of venue shopping for mobilizing support. Instead, the proposition was cultivated internally until it landed on the desk of the Cabinet in January 1976, and a natural forum to pass it on to was the ongoing Police Commission. Such a move was also fairly safe in terms of containing the understanding of the problem. The Cabinet had appointed the commission, chaired by the deputy justice minister.

The motive for setting up the 1975 Police Commission was reportedly that the time was ripe for an evaluation. There was, however, a more concrete reason for establishing the commission, and its initial instructions were sketched out in the fall of 1974. Discontent among governors of some Swedish counties (which Sweden was divided into 24 of at this time) was approaching the boiling point. The county administrative boards (chaired by county governors) were the highest operative police authorities. The National Police Board and its director general often sidestepped the county boards and instead directly informed county police commissioners (who were members of these boards). The county governors lamented that, as they claimed, the National Police Board had become far too powerful, and the police too centralized. The National Police Board had allegedly become a giant with feet of clay (Falkenstam 1983; Persson 1990).

But the discontent was not reserved to the county boards. "For many, Carl Persson went too far in his ambitions with the National Police Board," according to Welander (2003). "Within the Justice Ministry, certain factions were displeased with the power that the National Police Board developed. It was meant to be a rather limited authority, but it turned out to be a powerful force, thanks to Persson" (ibid.). Johan Munck, who was secretary to the 1975 Police Commission, corroborated this claim. "Within the Social Democratic party and also within the Center party, there was a discontent with the fact that the

police organization had been far too centralized, and that was the reason behind the 1975 Police Commission" (Munck 2004). Socialist MP Arne Nygren agreed that there was a widespread Social Democratic uneasiness with the National Police Board's ambition to centralize power (Nygren 2004).

Director General Carl Persson was not only admired, but was also arguably a reason for discontent and a source of concern for some within the Justice Ministry. It was widely known that Persson and Justice Minister Lennart Geijer were on a collision course during the latter's term of office (1970–1976) due to different ideas and visions of criminal justice politics (Falkenstam 1983; Welander 1998).

As it became known within the National Police Board that instructions for a police commission were being drafted, they proactively welcomed the idea in an official letter to the Cabinet. They referred to ongoing inquiries where steps towards a more democratized administration were suggested. Indirectly, the official letter reproached the Cabinet for not having heeded prior inquiry suggestions made by the National Police Board (Falkenstam 1983).

It is possible that the Cabinet saw the policy initiative regarding the Stockholm police Special Response Units as a new effort to centralize police power in Stockholm, and therefore the initiative was received with limited enthusiasm. A policy core belief shared by the Social Democratic party elite and not least by local and regional police commissioners was that police power needed to be transferred from Stockholm to the local and regional police authorities. In that respect, it is not surprising that the commission decided not to touch upon organizational issues when preparing the preliminary study on the Stockholm police Special Response Units (Ds Ju 1977:2).

The commission's room to maneuver on matters of counter-terrorism was limited by the instructions. On the other hand, it is unlikely that its members had any intention to focus on matters that were not of immediate concern for the Cabinet. Deputy Justice Minister Sven Andersson headed the commission and the justice minister's press secretary Ebbe Carlsson was its secretary together with Åke Polstam, previously of the National Police Board but at that time representing the Center party in Parliament.[36] Carl Persson had been appointed as an expert to the commission, but did not attend their meetings since he thought the entire idea with the commission was to have him removed from office (Falkenstam 1983).

For a large part of the Swedish population, 19 September 1976 came with an inconceivable surprise: For the first time in 44 years, the Social Democratic party lost governmental power. The ramifications of this cannot be underesti-

36 Ebbe Carlsson had sketched out the early drafts of the instructions, which allegedly had been rather unrefined attacks against the National Police Board (Falkenstam 1983; Welander 2003).

mated. For the entire Social Democratic party, the experience was bewildering. Renowned Social Democrats cried openly. A few optimists thought that a period of opposition would do well for the party (Peterson 2002: 248; Leijon 1991: 169).

The Social Democratic defeat was perhaps even more difficult to grasp for the parties that were eternally in opposition. The Center party turned out to be the largest of the non-socialist parties with 25 % of the vote, followed by the Conservatives with 15 % and the Liberals with 11 %. It was however not clear that all three parties would form a Cabinet together. The Center party had gained popularity through its resolute opposition to nuclear power, whereas the Conservatives and Liberals continued to believe in it as a source of energy. However, on 7 October the three parties decided to form a coalition Cabinet. The non-affiliated Supreme Court judge Sven Romanus became justice minister, with fellow judge Henry Montgomery his deputy. Neither had prior experience with the police. Within justice politics circles, it came as a surprise that the Conservative chair of the Parliament Justice Committee Astrid Kristensson was not given the justice minister post. She had profiled herself as a law enforcement expert and was allegedly quite disappointed that she did not become justice minister after the 1976 election (Falkenstam 1983; Welander 2003).

With the change in government, a policy window opened for breaking the deadlock on police polices. It should have been natural for the Cabinet to give the 1975 Police Commission supplementary instructions, but that did not happen. In this regard, the fact that non-politicians with no experience of police issues occupied the top two posts at the Justice Ministry is highly relevant. They did not have a police policy agenda (Welander 2003).

In addition to this, Astrid Kristensson became a fierce opponent of the non-socialist Cabinet's justice politics, making it hard to find compromises within the governing coalition (Montgomery 2004). Allegedly, the discontent was a result of her being passed over for Sven Romanus as justice minister (Welander 2003). Conservative party leader Gösta Bohman had according to Kristensson held an over-confidence in lawyers and wanted the justice minister to be a court lawyer, effectively excluding Kristensson from consideration (Falkenstam 1983: 254-255). Besides, the Liberals were not too keen on Kristensson as justice minister (Ibid.). Hence, one of Carl Persson's closest political allies did not get more political room to maneuver after the 1976 elections.

In 1978 Carl Persson resigned as director general of the National Police Board after 14 years at the post. Former Chief Prosecutor Holger Romander replaced him. The demise of Persson marked a new epoch of the National Police Board. Some welcomed the peace and quiet, while others missed the dynamics that had characterized the Persson era (Falkenstam 1983).

Even if the most conspicuous problems between the National Police Board and the Justice Ministry disappeared when Lennart Geijer left the ministry, tensions still existed. Deputy Justice Minister (1976–1979) Henry Montgomery took over the chairmanship of the 1975 Police Commission. He was also the person at the ministry who had most contact with Director General Persson. "When Carl Persson resigned, I saw that as a big relief", Montgomery revealed (Montgomery 2004). He seldom opposed Persson's policy suggestions, but had considerable concerns with the way Persson played the political game (Ibid.).

8.1.3 Summing up

The police in charge of law and order were deeply troubled at not having the capability to handle critical incidents. But their efforts to come to terms with this deficiency failed to result in a better-trained and equipped force, even during non-socialist governments.

Social Democratic MP Arne Nygren (2004) maintains that "An anti-terrorism police unit was just completely inconceivable in the 70s," in a view that neatly captures the opinions of the political-administrative justice establishment of that time. Similar views were conveyed by Johan Munck (2004), Håkan Winberg (2004), Gösta Welander (2003), Henry Montgomery (2004) and Ingvar Gullnäs (2004).

The explanation for policy stability provided by belief-based assumptions reveals that preparedness for being able to effectively meet terrorism was not necessarily a main concern for the actors involved – at least not for the majority coalition. Instead, policymaking was guided by skepticism over the intents of the National Police Board, in combination with an ambition to decentralize police power. These policy core beliefs survived not only the embassy drama as such, but also law and order initiatives promoted by the police and changes in government. They encompassed law and order, as well as security policing. The misadventures that afflicted Säpo during this decade in some respects had a bigger impact on the policy agenda in that they reinforced recurring beliefs about the National Police Board. Interestingly, the embassy drama brought salience to the issue of terrorism, but did not affect beliefs about the police and therefore not views on counter-terrorism either.

8.2 Attention-based perspective and policy stability 1973–1986

8.2.1 Terrorism legislation and Säpo: Entrepreneurs leave the scene

The 1976 amendments to the Terrorist Act cannot be ascribed as entrepreneurial strategizing, unless the positive feedback process in favor of the personal requisite was related to the Liberal argumentation against 'guilt by association' aired in Parliament. That point was also advocated by others, however for different reasons. One Liberal MP tried to capitalize on the embassy drama by pointing out the toothlessness of a law that apparently did not hinder terrorists from entering the country, which was the essential purpose of the Terrorist Act (Protocol 1975:78 § 6).

Apart from the paragraphs aimed at keeping terrorists out of the country, the Terrorist Act also contained sections regulating police investigative powers (which became the Special Investigations Act). Within Säpo, signals warning of the embassy assault were picked up beforehand, but means for sorting and acting on them were allegedly lacking. The head of Säpo, Hans Holmér, commented, "A reasonable increase of Säpo can have a reasonable effect" (Aftonbladet 13/05/1975). Holmér was certainly well-situated as head of Säpo, and enjoyed a good relationship with the Social Democratic Cabinet, in particular Justice Minister Geijer. Holmér was aware that his control over Säpo was curtailed by Carl Persson and also by some of his own subordinates (Falkenstam 1983; SOU 2002:87 p. 568). Holmér and the Justice Ministry wanted Säpo to focus more on counter-terrorism, but General Director Persson and his allies at Säpo instead wanted to invest more in counter-espionage. Säpo did not receive additional resources, but some staff from the counter-espionage department was moved to the counter-terrorism department (Persson 1990: 210; Frånstedt 2003).

The hospital spy affair during the fall of 1975 is indeed complicated and opaque. The objective here is by no means to clear up the affair. Säpo and/or IB and/or the Social Democratic party had an incentive to keep some of the staff at the Gothenburg hospital under surveillance for reasons related to subversion and/or terrorism (Falkenstam 1983: 216-230; Vinge 1988: 198-210; Persson 1990: 336-364; SOU 2002:87 pp. 546–550). What is of relevance, however, is that the affair drew attention to the issue of opinion monitoring. The dramaturgy was reminiscent of similar events in the 1960s and implied that the police had created a state within the state, beyond political purposes and insight. In fact, Carl Persson reacted strongly to "the general debate" in which voices had been raised fearing that the police had indeed created such a state within the

state. He maintained that the Swedish police were as open as any police organization could be, with a variety of control bodies including Parliament and the Cabinet (Svensk Polis 10/1975). When the subject matter was discussed and understood in state within the state terms, it was arguably not politically advantageous to promote additional powers for Säpo or to suggest making the Special Investigations Act permanent.

In the summer of 1976 Hans Holmér accepted the job as Stockholm police commissioner, which was more prestigious than head of Säpo. Carl Persson had his last fight with Geijer and the Justice Department over the appointment of Holmér's successor, Sven-Åke Hjälmroth. Persson thought that the head of Säpo should at least have a law degree, and in his capacity as director general he had a prescribed say on the issue. But as the Justice Ministry sidestepped him, he did not even bother to promote his own favorite candidates, among them deputy director Olof Frånstedt (Persson 1990: 216-217). The episode indicates that Carl Persson was losing influence as a policy entrepreneur on security police policy, but also that the Justice Ministry clearly wanted a less pugnacious Säpo head. Holmér, like Persson, had been a colorful and charismatic leader, and the two had been fierce antagonists since Holmér became head of Säpo. Their ongoing battle had had a detrimental effect on the working situation within Säpo (Falkenstam 1983: 151-215). Hjälmroth, the staff manager at the Stockholm police, had allegedly been surprised on being offered the post (Persson 1990: 217), but was arguably not likely to challenge his superiors or employer.

In Parliament, especially after the Social Democratic defeat in 1976, both Communists and Social Democrats were openly suspicious of Säpo. Their criticism was based on a distrust of how Säpo applied their coercive powers. In reaction to rumors of infringements that had circulated in the media and Parliament for years, the Communist party and a Social Democratic faction called on the Cabinet in 1979 to set up a parliamentary commission to scrutinize Säpo (Motions 1979/80:802 and 803). The motions were raised in the aftermath of the Bergling affair (in which a Säpo employee was uncovered as a KGB agent). The sensational event was in other words capitalized on to pursue a campaign against Säpo, the point being made that the Bergling affair was possible *because* Säpo misdirected their attention.

But positive feedback failed to materialize at this point. The Parliament Justice Committee declined the aforementioned motions, not least since the National Police Board in 1978, on their own initiative, had started to reform Säpo (JuU 1979/80:3). As a result, Säpo would change their policies on information dissemination. Despite these self-regulatory efforts, Säpo as an organization was contested by elements of the left. Understanding the Säpo debate

sheds light on the preemptive counter-terrorism policy process of this decade, and is also symptomatic of the image of the police in general.

8.2.2 Law and order policing: Entrepreneurial efforts in adverse conditions

The West German embassy drama called into question police capacity for performing during severe incidents. Prime Minister Olof Palme was soon to take an initiative on this front. In a press conference only hours after the embassy building had been secured, he said that Swedish society would have to live with the occurrence of terrorist attacks. The alternative would be to create a police state (SVT, Extrarapport 25/4/1975). Siding against this position could thereby be associated with extremism and all its unfavorable connotations.

But the police – first in Stockholm and later the National Police Board – made a move. General Director Persson had reportedly advocated creating a police assault capacity even before the embassy drama, without success (Persson 1990: 258). Stockholm Police Commissioner Kurt Lindroth had earlier been Persson's deputy director general, and the two had a good rapport. Both were present at the crisis cabinet at the chancellery during the embassy drama (Ibid.). Arguably, the Stockholm police proposition regarding the Special Response Units did therefore not come as a surprise for the National Police Board. When the issue was referred to the Cabinet, the understanding of the problem that the police conveyed was one of workplace security for the Stockholm police: Equipment deficiency and organizational performance had jeopardized the security for officers on the scene (Stockholm police 1975b).

Except for these expressions of will by the Stockholm police and National Police Board, it is difficult to find any support for a police capacity capable of tackling terrorism or other severe incidents. Only the Conservative chair of the Parliament Justice Committee, Astrid Kristensson, speaking at two consecutive parliamentary discussions on the Terrorist Act (Protocol 1975:78 § 6; Protocol 1975/76:44 § 10) cautiously aired the prospect of considering a re-evaluation of the matter.

> I think that we from a Swedish point of view can be happy that the police do their work in a good way, even if it is possible that we need to reconsider the issue of some kind of special education and maybe improved organization to be able to act more effectively domestically in case we are hit by another act of terrorism (Protocol 1975/76:44 § 10).

In April 1977, after Säpo's arrest of the terrorist group that planned to kidnap former minister Anna-Greta Leijon for her involvement in the embassy drama, *Svensk Polis* (the National Police Board's peer journal) published an account of the action. Moreover, an editorial in the Stockholm daily *Dagens Nyheter* was

cited in its entirety, since it had attracted much attention within the police. The payoff line of the editorial, entitled "The victory of self-control over great risks", read:

> So far we have been spared one thing more than other societies that have been battlegrounds and bases for capricious cross-border guerrilla warfare: We have been spared having our own defense powers against political violence transformed into a tool for systematic excesses and harassment of citizens (Svensk Polis 4/1977: 2).

The article exposed and articulated the fear that many felt was consistent with creating an effective anti-terrorist police capacity. This took place only months after the 1975 Police Commission had delivered its special assignment report on the Stockholm police Special Response Units and severe incidents, which had resulted in only marginal adjustments to the prevailing order (Ds Ju 1977:2).

The *zeitgeist* changed in the mid-1970. The end of the Vietnam War in the summer of 1975 also ended opposition to it. The political movement started in the 1960s as a reaction to Vietnam, and found itself obsolete when the war ended. A new conflict emerged on the public agenda, where economic growth was put in relation to ecological sustainability. Traditional growth-oriented parties, such as the Social Democrats and the Conservatives, clearly faced a new challenge. However, the Center party (and to some extent the Communists) heralded this development for years, but only gained momentum when the red wave turned green. But the green wave also brought new law and order problems, especially at nuclear power plants (Nylén 2004).

The National Police Board made a new effort to advocate the idea of a specially trained and equipped anti-terrorist police force in March 1979, with reference to the vulnerability of nuclear power plants. The National Police Board set up a working group to explore the issue. Reportedly, this initiative was by coincidence forwarded in the immediate aftermath of the nuclear meltdown at Three Mile Island (it had been in the works since 1977) (Nylén 2004). But as we saw in part one, this framing did not convince the skeptics, who labeled the entrepreneurial effort as an 'atom police' – alluding to allegedly brutal police forces in West Germany and France – when the report was presented in the spring of 1980. The nuclear energy issue was glowing hot, and would later in 1980 be subject to a referendum. After the 1980 National Police Board proposal, Communist and Social Democratic MPs wondered if the 'atom police' would prevent nuclear energy opponents from organizing demonstrations (Protocol 1979/80:153 § 4).

The unfavorable public image of the police seems to have caused the non-socialist parties to abstain from taking any initiatives once they gained governmental power. Former Conservative Justice Minister (1979–81) Håkan Winberg reflected upon the non-socialist passivity between 1976 and 1982:

> When we won the 1976 elections, the Social Democrats and the labor union started a scaremongering, stating that the entire social welfare system would be dismantled. Sick people would be left alone without medical attention. In a climate like that, we were cautious to propose anything that could cause loud disapproval (Winberg 2004).

8.2.3 Summing up

When incumbent, the Social Democrats did not openly contest Säpo or the National Police Board in Parliament. The front against the police-skeptic Communists was unified. However after the 1976 defeat, Social Democrats joined the chorus of Säpo critics. And likewise, whenever reorganization of the Stockholm police Special Response Units became topical, Social Democrats openly aired their discontent. When they regained power in 1982, it is understandable that the issue of the Stockholm police Special Response Units was abandoned. Parliament had become an unpredictable venue for carrying through such policy suggestions. Counter-terrorism police work was not a likely future winner for the new Social Democratic justice minister, and it had been far from a safe bet for his non-socialist predecessors. Processes of negative feedback, in particular in Parliament, set in as soon as the police launched new entrepreneurial efforts. But Parliament also accounted for negative feedback processes when suggestions were made to overhaul Säpo, which made Parliament a non-susceptible venue for efforts at reforming Swedish counter-terrorism policies during this decade.

Counter-terrorism policy stability can hence be explained as political abstention to capitalize on the embassy drama due to insufficient *expected* constituencies. The entrepreneurial efforts of the National Police Board and the Stockholm police resulted in processes of negative feedback because the image of the police, including Säpo, had become marred by problems of legitimacy and trust. And that image had rather been reinforced through the way other events were portrayed and understood.

8.3 Conclusions

The relative standstill of counter-terrorism policymaking after the embassy drama would, in line with the perspectives developed in chapter six, be related to either unchanged advocacy coalition structures or processes of negative feedback. Empirical evidence supported both perspectives in this case, which is indicative of their complementary nature. Both perspectives purported to reveal a relation between crisis and patterns of policy change. This concluding section

is the place to reflect on the role of the seizure of the West German embassy in the period of policy stability that followed.

The embassy drama did not change policy core beliefs on the role and development of the National Police Board. The assault proved that the Terrorist Act was unfit for its purpose, i.e. to prevent terrorists from entering the country. However, this did not change beliefs about the qualities of the law. Despite turbulence on the political and administrative scenes, belief-based coalitions kept judicial power over these policy domains. Even when not in office, the Social Democratic belief-system permeated the issue area. The non-socialist parties did not have a coalesced criminal justice agenda, let alone a police policy agenda. And policy coalitions outside Parliament, such as discontent police organizations outside Stockholm, enjoined the Social Democratic aspirations for decentralized police power, channeled through the 1975 Police Commission.

There is however no evidence that the embassy drama as such was framed by the majority coalition to support its belief about the National Police Board, i.e. that the crisis supported the argument that police power needed be decentralized. The impact of the seizure, and the dilemmas it implied, were arguably not powerful enough for that coalition to review policy core beliefs. Therefore the entrepreneurial efforts, which the analysis also highlighted, were quelled in processes of negative feedback. Skilful (counter) entrepreneurial strategies consigned police initiatives to temporary oblivion.

The fact that the embassy drama was not framed by the majority coalition to be supportive of its policy core beliefs (i.e. to decentralize police power) indicates that it rather challenged those beliefs. In that sense, the attention-based perspective comes closer in its assumptions about the making of policies, when accounting for the policy trajectory. The relatively happy ending of the embassy drama is of great importance here. If compared to the management and the managerial prerequisites, one may even say that the ending was undeservingly happy. As demonstrated by the scenes from inside the crisis cabinet depicted in chapter four, the risks in relation to the low police capacity were well known within governmental circles. But since the ending was happy, (to some extent a construction, since three people died and more were injured), the attention generated by the incident allowed for an interpretation in line with the majority coalition's. A counterfactual argument should be considered: If the embassy drama had ended in carnage, would a policy change in line with what the Stockholm and National Police Board suggested have been possible to ignore? Had a blood bath taken place, it is however probable that a shift of belief-systems would have followed as well.

As it were, events of a different category, like the hospital spy affair and the Bergling affair, instead reinforced images that made policy options implying less power to the National Police Board possible. Both perspectives come to

the conclusion that Swedish preparedness and capability for counter-terrorism was a subordinated issue during this period. The police was in itself a bigger democratic problem than a solution to any one subset of problems within the criminal justice sector.